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THE ARMENIAN AWAKENING  
A HISTORY OF ARMENIAN CHRISTIANITY  
THE ATONEMENT IN EXPERIENCE

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A CENTURY OF  
ARMENIAN  
PROTESTANTISM

1846-1946

BY LEON ARPEE



1946

THE ARMENIAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION  
OF AMERICA, INC.

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To  
The Reverend  
A. A. BEDIKIAN  
Executive Secretary  
of the  
Armenian Missionary Association  
of America, Inc.,  
with fraternal esteem  
and affection  
of the Author



## NOTICE

The five chapters following the Introductory chapter of this little volume appeared originally in *The Armenian Awakening*, published by the University of Chicago Press in 1909, and now out of print; the following chapter, seventh of this book, first saw light in the June, 1936, issue of *Church History*, and the eighth chapter in the February, 1945, *Avetagir*, organ of the Armenian Missionary Association of America, Inc. With only some necessary alterations, all are here reproduced, by permission.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

ALL great movements have been world movements, and such have affected us Armenians intimately. When first Christianity came to us, it was as a world movement. If afterward Arianism affected us, it was because in its time it was a world movement. Our vaunted Paulicianism itself was only a part of this latter trend. The later Protestantism was a world movement, international in character. Before Luther of Germany went Gansfort of the Netherlands, before Gansfort went Huss of Bohemia, before Huss, Wycliff of England. And Protestantism did not leave us untouched.

The evangelical spirit in truth is a universal spirit, as universal as the Christian spirit itself. One of its first principles is the demand for freedom of conscience. This we Armenians early contended for. We did that when we fought Persian bigotry. We demanded it constantly from the Moslem ruler, Arab or Turk. And we could not consistently surrender it within Christendom. When on the Centennial of the Council of Chalcedon we withdrew from the West, and declared ourselves a separate Church, with an Era of our own, we proclaimed ourselves among the first separatists and Protestants of the world. All that easily explains why Armenians at heart have been in such sympathy with the Protestant Reformation. We have always been a progressive people, and the Protestant Reformation, which was but the religious angle to the modern era, with its steam, industrial revolution, press, modern science, medicine and education, could not fail to appeal to us.

In the matter of religious doctrine the Armenian has been no blind follower of local or sectional opinion. In spite of



all accusations to the contrary Armenian doctrine has been strictly orthodox doctrine. In our own day general theological opinion once again is leaning to Theopaschitism (not Patripassianism), that very correct teaching that when Christ suffered on the Cross it was not a mere man, but God himself, that suffered. Nor has any Armenian evangelical of today any fault to find, outside of a few already outmoded superfluities, with old Armenian teaching and practice. He discovers but little in the writings of the old teachers of the Church that he can condemn, in St. Gregory, in Elisaeus, in Eznik, Gregory of Nareg, Nerses the Graceful, or Gregory of Datev. These and other writers, if they were writing today, could pass for very acceptable evangelicals.

Nor is evangelism, or the preaching of the gospel, without which there can be no vital evangelicalism, anything new among us. We have our oldest records of it in St. Gregory. John Mandakuni would be an acceptable Protestant preacher today. The Catholicos Moses III, in the seventeenth century, before he became high prelate, was an outstanding modern preacher of the gospel among us. And in more recent times, John Golod, later Patriarch of Constantinople, with his helpers made the hills and valleys of Armenia fairly ring with gospel preaching. Peshtimaljian, therefore, the Armenian Erasmus (neither Catholic nor Protestant), in the nineteenth century, with Der-Sahakian and others of his pupils, himself was only in a great succession, rather than an originator, as has been maintained, of Armenian Protestantism.

When then the first American missionaries, Goodell and Dwight, came to us, necessarily it was with no hostile intent toward our National Church. Of necessity biased as Protestants against the Church of Rome, they had no such original bias against the Church of Armenia, or against Armenian Christianity. Armenians in fact generally wel-



comed the missionaries as friends, and the prejudice against them among some of our people was in good part "made in Rome." Goodell and Dwight came in friendly spirit to pay a debt, not to Armenian Paulicianism, as sometimes has been wrongly represented, but to that Christianity which originally had come to themselves from the Church of Asia Minor, in the post-Apostolic age, rather than Greece, North Africa or Italy, *par excellence* the Christian Land, as Harnack has amply shown.

Hence if in our own times we have sought again to learn from the world, we have done nothing but what it was our right to do. In the earlier years of the nineteenth century some of our young men went to the French Universities and came back with new ideas that gave Turkish Armenians the Constitution, ideas the French themselves had derived from the American Revolution and ultimately from the English Revolution. But to borrow in things temporal and not in things spiritual were short-sighted borrowing. So Der-Sahakian, and any number of Armenians since, who went to America, and Scotland, and Germany, and Switzerland, to acquaint themselves of western religious thought and learning, to help make modern Armenian Christianity glorious, were doing nothing amiss.

Meanwhile our Armenian evangelicals have ever cherished a filial regard and affection for the National Church, the first evangelicals, though persecuted, being proud to call themselves Armenian Christians still, and saying so. In fact no persecution ever alienated them from the mother Church; not until the Patriarch Matthew, afterward Catholicos, had actually put them out of the Church by excommunication and anathema did they organize themselves into a separate body. But in doing that, too, they proved themselves both true Armenians and good Christians.

Nor does the balance of the exchange of ideas and life with other nations leave us entirely debtors to them. If in the past we got something from France and America, we are surely paying it back in sweat and blood. On the battlefields, in the halls of learning, and in this country from the preacher's desk also, Armenians have been repaying their debt. So I presume it always will be, peoples and nations ever exchanging their moral and spiritual, not less than their material benefits, until some day we shall all be one Kingdom of Kindness, bound together to the Throne of God.



## CHAPTER II

### THE FIRST REFORMERS

THE first Protestant missionary societies to enter the Turkish empire were the Church Missionary Society of the Church of England, and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. The former in 1815 sent a missionary to Egypt; the latter in 1818 assigned two men to Palestine.

The pioneers of the American Board in the Turkish empire early were impressed with the fact that the Armenians, of all the races in the Sultan's dominions, were the most open to Protestant missionary influences. In 1821 Parsons met at Jerusalem some Armenian pilgrims who showed him much cordiality, and led him to suggest to the Prudential Committee of the board the desirability of someone "making known to the churches the moral state of Armenia"—a suggestion which was to be carried out in 1833 by the publication of Smith and Dwight's *Researches*. Six years afterward—on New Year's Day, 1827—Bird and Goodell of the Syrian mission (established 1823) received two Armenian helpers, Bishop Dionysius and Vartabed Gregory, into the mission church at Beirut as the first-fruits of American missionary labors in Turkey. Such being the case there was nothing more natural than that the American Board and its missionaries should early be looking for an opportunity to do a special work for the Armenians of Turkey.

The temporary suspension of the Syrian mission created the desired opportunity. In May, 1828, the missionaries at Beirut and their Armenian helpers, finding their lives in danger from Mohammedan fanaticism aroused by the news of the battle of Navarino, sailed for the Island of Malta which

sheltered the printing establishment of the mission of the Levant, and which, being a British possession, offered the fugitives a safe retreat from the political commotions of the times. The Syrian mission was for the time being abandoned, and the Syrian missionaries were given leisure for other work.

One of the first thoughts, naturally, was to put in operation the press which shortly before the arrival of the Beirut missionaries and in response to a recommendation made by them as early as 1824 had been sent to Malta for the purpose of printing literature exclusively for the Armenians (1827). Goodell immediately commenced to print some Armeno-Turkish tracts.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, with the help of Dionysius, he prosecuted the translation of the Armeno-Turkish Testament, until by January, 1830, this work was ready for the printer.<sup>2</sup>

In the meantime plans were maturing for the commencing of active missionary operations among the Armenians. A previous suggestion that Goodell might establish himself

<sup>1</sup> Tracts in the Turkish language printed in Armenian characters, intended for the use of Armenians whose vernacular was Turkish. About one-third of the Armenians of Turkey are said to have belonged to this class.

<sup>2</sup> Goodell's Armeno-Turkish Testament was not the first translation which made the Christian Scriptures intelligible to the Armenian laity. The Armeno-Turkish Testament of Keghamian of Erivan, published by the Russian Bible Society at St. Petersburg, had preceded it by nearly a decade (1822), and Zohrab's Modern Armenian Testament, published at Paris by the British and Foreign Bible Society, by six years (1825). These, however, had been rendered from the ancient Armenian Bible, while Goodell's version was the first to have the distinction of being made from the original Greek.

Goodell's life was largely devoted to the translation and repeated revision of the Armeno-Turkish Scriptures. His first translation of the New Testament was published in 1831; his first translation of the Old Testament, in 1842. He was assisted in the first by Bishop Dionysius; in the second, mainly by Panayotes Constantinides—a Greek who had been enlightened by intercourse with a certain Church of England clergyman, and who from 1835 to the time of his death in 1861 was Goodell's constant associate and helper. Goodell's Armeno-Turkish Bible was published in its final revised form in 1863—only two years before his last return to the United States, where he died (1867).

either at Smyrna or at Constantinople, "as his knowledge of Turkish will introduce him to the Armenians," took more definite shape in the year 1829 at a missionary conference convened at Malta by Rufus Anderson, assistant secretary of the American Board, at the time on a tour in the Levant, when it was proposed that Goodell should proceed to Constantinople and there establish a mission station; and pursuant to this recommendation, in the spring of 1831, Goodell received instructions from the Prudential Committee appointing him the first resident American missionary to the city of the Sultan.

William Goodell arrived at Constantinople on the morning of June 9, 1831. H. G. O. Dwight joined him in the following year. Thus was founded the mission of the American Board to the Armenians of Turkey. In 1833, with their making the acquaintance of John Der-Sahakian, the work of these missionaries was launched.

Sahakian had formerly been a student at the patriarchal academy and a pupil of Peshtimaljian, the noted principal of that institution, and was one of those young Armenians of this time who were awakened to the superstitions of the church and earnestly desired its reformation, although at a loss as to what course to pursue to secure that end. When it was noised abroad in the city that two missionaries had come from America with the avowed object of establishing schools, but with the real purpose to spread infidelity, his curiosity was aroused, and, in January, 1833, he came to the mission, then in the suburb of Ortakeuy, on the Bosphorus, to ascertain the facts in the case for himself. The ultimate result was that in the summer of the same year (July 18) he came to place himself, with a companion, Minassian by name (Paul "Physica"), under the instruction and guidance of the Americans who saw in the two young men the making



of welcome interpreters of their message to the Armenian population of the city.<sup>3</sup>

After a few months' work in Brusa, under the direction of the missionaries, Sahakian was in the fall of 1834 appointed general superintendent of the mission high school then recently opened (October 27, 1834) at Pera. This was the first school among the Armenians of Constantinople that offered such a variety of learning as eastern and western languages, with arithmetic, bookkeeping, geography, zoölogy, physics, astronomy, and theology. Alas, that it proved short-lived. The missionaries were careful from the beginning to disclaim all ulterior designs of proselytism in founding it; but the conservative element in the community looked upon it, nevertheless, with dire suspicion, and in a few years secured its suppression. Early in 1835 a priest was sent by the patriarch's vicar to inspect the school, and early in 1837, as soon, that is, as the imperial architects, Balian and Serverian, had set preparations on foot for the founding of a rival national college at Scutari, the parents of the students of the mission school were summoned before the vicar and ordered to withdraw their sons from the institution of the foreigners.

But the suppression of the mission school only transferred Sahakian to a post of yet wider influence. In the suburb of Hasskeuy on the Golden Horn the Armenians at this time had a large parish school—one of the two or three foremost institutions of the kind at the capital. Its patron, the famous Jezairlian, undertook early in 1837 to enlarge and to remodel

<sup>3</sup> Sahakian was at this time private tutor in the home of an Armenian magnate. Minassian was a teacher in the patriarchal academy. The latter rendered the mission valuable service for a time, but in the end disappointed the missionaries by imbibing infidel ideas, of which, however, he is said to have repented before his death. He studied medicine in the United States, which may partly account for his relapse.

it on the Lancasterian plan, at this time vigorously advocated by the missionaries, and placed the very man whose activities the vicar had thought to check by suppressing the mission school at the head of this national institution to supervise the making of the new changes. Sahakian willingly accepted the call to Hasskeuy as affording a rare opportunity for the spiritual work to which, with him, everything else was but a means to an end, and the more so as he was to be associated with a kindred spirit in the person of the priest George Ardžruni who had been for some years a teacher in the school at Hasskeuy. Endowed with great personal magnetism and boldness of speech, priest George, although he never became a Protestant, was at this time, both in school and parish, a most worthy representative of the evangelical cause; and as Sahakian went to Hasskeuy, he knew that in his every effort for religious enlightenment, he could depend on the priest's hearty co-operation.

But Sahakian was not allowed long to remain at Hasskeuy, any more than he was at Pera. Said Dwight at the beginning of 1838, "The more I go among the Armenians, the more evidence I see that the work of the Lord has taken deep root in the nation." But he added: "There are, however, many watchful adversaries." And those watchful adversaries were more than Jezairlian cared to cope with. The school of Hasskeuy was for a time very popular. Six hundred scholars filled it to its utmost capacity. Jezairlian's example was soon followed by other magnates in the city and suburbs, and schools on the Lancasterian plan were established in Pera, Ortakeuy, and Psamatia. But by the end of 1838 the influence of the imperial architects, who bitterly opposed the countenancing of persons or ideas in any way associated with the missionaries, had compelled Jezairlian to dismiss his superintendent and to place his school on its former basis. The

storms of persecution were already gathering about the evangelicals.

By this time, however, the evangelical movement had made considerable headway—so much headway, in fact, that the authorities of the church in their excitement estimated the evangelicals at about five hundred. Goodell had now for several years been conducting weekly meetings in Turkish for Bible-study and prayer. Dwight for over two years had been preaching in the Armenian tongue. The Evangelical Union, organized in 1836, a secret society, practically a church, now composed of about a score of members, had for three years been holding weekly meetings at the mission, and under the vigorous leadership of Sahakian, its secretary, had been making its influence felt both at the capital and in the provinces in the dissemination of evangelical ideas.

The imperial architects, engaged as they were in building one of the Sultan's favorite palaces, at this juncture had Mahmud's ear, and consequently commanded the political power to push through almost any measure of their fancying in church and community. Conservative, and bigoted in their attitude toward the new sect, they now decided to resort to persecution. In maturing their persecuting schemes, their first step was to effect a change in the office of patriarchal vicar. The patriarch of the time, the amiable Stephen, surnamed "the Dove," had always been tolerant toward the missionaries, and in the earlier days of the mission had shown them much cordiality; and he did not approve of a persecution now. But he was a weak man, and could safely be ignored. The persecuting magnates felt that they only needed one in the office of vicar who could outdo in persecuting zeal the half-measures of the then incumbent to inaugurate the most thoroughgoing persecution. That one was found in



Jacob Seropian, bishop of Marsovan and Amasia, who was brought to Constantinople on February 17, appointed patriarchal vicar, and vested with all the practical powers of the patriarchate.

When all plans had matured the persecution began in earnest. On February 19, 1839, Sahakian, the "ringleader" of the "evangelical infidels," and Minassian, another former pupil of Peshtimaljian's, who now taught a school in the city in part supported by the mission, were arrested and cast into the patriarchal jail. Without a trial, or even a formal accusation, these men were on the fourth day of their confinement given in charge of a Turkish police officer, and by imperial edict hurried across Asia Minor into exile at the Convent of St. Garabed at Cesarea. The priest George was arrested in the following month in the same summary manner, and imprisoned for an entire month, after which he was exiled to the Convent of Armash, near Nicomedia. Several other ecclesiastics, altogether innocent of heresy, were at this time similarly treated. For the authorities were not very particular as to how many innocent ones suffered, provided the guilty were not allowed to go unpunished. On March 3 all missionary publications were by patriarchal bull put under the ban, and all those who were in possession of heretical books were called upon to deliver them up to their spiritual overseers. On March 25 Jacob, who had well vindicated the confidence which the imperial architects had reposed in him, was allowed to supplant Stephen in the patriarchal chair. Stephen retired to the Convent of Armash, his episcopal seat near Nicomedia, and presently an imperial edict followed directing the patriarchs of the several Christian sects "to look well to their flocks, and guard them against foreign influence and infidelity." On April 28 the new patri-

arch issued a bull, even more violently worded than the preceding one, threatening terrible anathemas against all those who should be found having any intercourse with the missionaries or reading their books, and against all such as should neglect to inform on offenders.

Even more than the persecution of individual natives the object upon which the persecutors had set their heart was the expulsion of the American missionaries from the country. And the personnel of the diplomatic corps at this juncture seemed in its character highly favorable to their attaining their object. Commodore Porter, the American *chargé d'affaires*, who was personally very friendly to the missionaries, not only was an envoy of secondary rank, but entertained a view of the Turkish-American Treaty of 1830 which allowed of no American missionary proselytism in the Turkish empire.<sup>4</sup> Lord Ponsonby, the British ambassador, although a Protestant, was totally absorbed in matters of diplomacy, and was no friend of missionaries. The Dutch, Swedish, and Prussian legations were temporarily in charge of Roman-Catholic subordinates, who along with the representatives of the Roman-Catholic powers were as eager as the Armenian hierarchy to have Protestantism driven out of the country. As to the Russian Ambassador Boutineff, inflexible enemy that he was of the missions of the American Board in Turkey, he openly declared to one of the American

<sup>4</sup> On May 16, 1841, in reply to a note from the Porte requesting the removal of the American missionaries from the Lebanon, Mr. Porter wrote: "The Constitution of the United States allows to all its citizens the right of the free exercise of their religious opinions, but no article of the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between the United States and Turkey gives them authority to interfere in any way with the rites and religion of any person living under the authority of Turkey. Therefore, after this correspondence has been made known to the American citizens residing in the vicinity of Mount Lebanon, any attempt to excite the minds of the inhabitants to change their rites and religion, must be done at their own risk, and on their responsibility."

missionaries, "My lord, the Tzar of Russia, will never allow Protestantism to set its foot in Turkey."<sup>5</sup>

But this the first organized persecution of Protestants in Turkey collapsed in the twinkling of an eye. Sultan Mahmud died on July 1, and the persecuting magnates lost their imperial support. At the same time Ibrahim Pasha's invasion of Asia Minor brought the arms and diplomacy of Protestant England into the forefront, and crowded the influence of orthodox Russia out of the Ottoman divan. About the middle of August the Armenian magnates decided to arrest the persecution. The exiles were told to return home—Sahakian, the last of them, returning to Constantinople in the May of 1840—and on September 27 Stephen again came to power and popularity. Then followed a great reaction in public sentiment, and the evangelical cause once more advanced apace.

This period of the evangelical movement is closely associated with the name of Gregory Peshtimaljian, the famous principal of the patriarchal academy. The reform movement in the Armenian church before the year 1839 owed its existence in large measure to this man's influence. It is a noteworthy fact that all of the first reformers and many of the later had, at one time or another, sat at his feet.

Peshtimaljian was for his day a man of wide learning and literary attainments. He was a religious poet of no mean ability, and the author of several important educational

<sup>5</sup> It is well known that it was by order of Ambassador Boutineff that a Russian Armenian by the name of Taliatian, in the employ of the American mission at Constantinople as instructor to Cyrus Hamlin, was one day in May, 1839, suddenly seized and placed on board a steamer bound for Trebizond, to be banished to Siberia. Hamlin relates (*Among the Turks*, pp. 34-37) how Taliatian landed at Trebizond with an American passport, and found his way to Calcutta, where he was to distinguish himself as an author and as the editor of *The Patriot*. Taliatian was a native of Erivan, a deacon in the Armenian church, and a former pupil of Bishop Heber at Bishop's College, Calcutta.



works. He was well versed in church history, both oriental and occidental, and held a high rank among the theologians and biblical scholars of his community. When, therefore, the patriarchal academy at Kum-kapu, originally founded by the patriarch Jacob Nalyan, and destroyed by the fire of 1826, was reopened in 1829 through the munificence of Harutun Bezjian and his coadjutors, Peshtimaljian, who had been teaching in the parish school of Ortakeuy, was thought of as the best man for such a responsible place, and was appointed principal of the institution. In this school of learning some fifty scholars, who composed the most advanced of four classes, studied grammar and logic under Peshtimaljian's immediate supervision. It was Peshtimaljian's duty also as principal of the academy to instruct all candidates for the priesthood, who, according to regulations lately adopted by the Synod of the patriarchate, could not be ordained to the sacred office without first having pursued a prescribed course of study in that institution. Thus in the course of his daily routine, Peshtimaljian had ample opportunity to instil in the minds of his pupils, both clerical and lay, a good deal of Christian truth, the more readily as the ancient Armenian New Testament was one of the important textbooks used in language-study. That his teaching could have been marked by much spirituality is not to be supposed; but how little sympathy he had with the formalism of the church may be inferred from one of his sayings in criticism of the day's orthodoxy: "When God created man, he made him in his own image; but man has now reversed the order, and endeavors to make God in man's image."

All classes of men loved Peshtimaljian; but when he died none, perhaps, missed him more than the evangelicals who had looked upon him as the best friend that they had in the church. For while Peshtimaljian looked sometimes with

dismay upon what he considered to be foolish radicalism on the part of the missionaries and their youthful followers, at this early stage of the Armenian reformation there was no measure to which he could not ultimately be reconciled. Peshtimaljian never saw the evangelical movement come to a crisis, and was never called upon to take a decided stand for it. He died in January, 1838, at the age of sixty-four years.

The beginnings of the evangelical movement in the city of Nicomedia are contemporaneous with its beginnings at Constantinople. In the year 1832, Goodell went on an overland tour to Brusa, preparatory to the establishment of a mission station in that city. On his way thither he spent a day in Nicomedia, where he visited the Armenian church, distributed a few Armeno-Turkish tracts at the church door, and left with an old priest a copy of his Armeno-Turkish New Testament. This led, so far as our information goes, to the awakening in Nicomedia. An Armeno-Turkish translation of Legh Richmond's *The Dairyman's Daughter* was among the tracts distributed, and it was especially the means of inculcating a spiritual religion and rousing an interest in the searching of the Scriptures. Kit Varjabed was at this time the principal of the parish school in Nicomedia, which like other parish schools was situated within the precincts of the church. He soon gathered around himself a company of priests and laymen, who daily met in a room within the church inclosure for the study of the Scriptures. In 1838 the band numbered sixteen souls. The fundamental doctrines of the gospel—so we are told by the missionaries who visited them—were very clearly apprehended by these men, and an earnest spirituality was their distinctive mark. When the expatriarch Stephen returned to his diocese in 1839, persecution was on the point of breaking out against the "Christian Brethren," as they were called among themselves, but the

presence of that primate restrained the bigotry of their enemies, and the little band was suffered to grow unmolested. Thus without the help of a resident missionary began in Nicomedia a movement which soon spread into the surrounding country, and before long gave to the evangelical cause in general one of its best workers in the person of the priest Vertanes.



## CHAPTER III

### THE PROTESTANT EXCISION

THE reaction in public sentiment which followed the persecution of 1839 made it possible for the American missionaries to renew their efforts with redoubled vigor. In the November of 1840 the mission high school was reopened at Bebek on the Bosphorus, under the supervision of Cyrus Hamlin who had arrived at Constantinople in the January of the preceding year. In 1840 over six, and in the following year over five million pages of the Scriptures and religious literature in Armenian and Armeno-Turkish were printed at the mission press at Smyrna, and sent to points as far apart as Adrianople and Odessa, Adabazar, Cesarea, and Tiflis. Before the end of 1840 Dwight rented in a khan in the business quarter of Stambul an office where twice every week he met with inquirers on religion, at the same time that he conducted at the mission a service every Sunday and two week-day inquiry meetings every week. Dwight's meetings of inquiry rapidly gained in popularity. The total number of those who at various times attended them rose from a score to a hundred and twenty and more. Those attending the meetings belonged for the most part to the middle class, who were the freest from the trammels of worldliness on the one hand and of bigotry on the other—the class which Protestantism won as well as developed in the Turkish empire.

Thus the new ideas spread, and began to make a great stir. Everywhere the tone of religious feeling appeared to be changing. The clergy sought more and more in the Bible the topics for their public discourses. In public places at the capital, such as coffee shops and bazars, the new doctrines

were freely discussed. Brusa, the most unpromising field of the whole mission, began to give enough signs of promise to justify the missionaries, on the point of being ordered to some other field, to continue their stay in that city; while in the diocese of Marsovan and Amasia, over which presided the persecuting ex-patriarch Jacob, missionary literature was freely circulated. It is true that the accession of Theodore to the patriarchal chair on October 1, 1841, became the signal for a revival of persecuting zeal, which continued more or less throughout his reign. Still, persecution never assumed formidable proportions under Theodore's reign, and early in 1844, such had been the progress of the evangelical movement in the meantime, Goodell, while anticipating much serious opposition calculated to retard its further progress, could use in addressing the "brethren" at Constantinople the following sanguine words: "If this work of God go forward for ten years to come as it has gone for ten years past, there will be no further occasion for any of us [missionaries] to remain here; unless it be to assist you in bringing to a knowledge of these same precious saving doctrines of the gospel, the Greeks and Jews, and others around you."

But the greatest persecution was yet to come under the patriarch Matthew, formerly bishop of Brusa and late of Smyrna, who ascended the patriarchal chair on July 29, 1844. As a premonition of the coming storm, Matthew in the latter part of that year instructed all parish priests to keep a record of the names of all those who failed to come to the confessional at the appointed seasons.

Unruffled, however, by the gathering clouds of persecution, the evangelicals at Constantinople made this a time of unusual missionary activity, and many of them set out to preach in distant cities and villages the doctrines of the Protestant reformation. One man visited the towns south of



the Marmora; another went eastward in Asia Minor as far as Trebizond; still another proceeded to Varna, while two went together on a missionary tour in European Turkey through Rodosto, Salonika, Philippi, Adrianople, Philipopolis, and Sophia.

The missionaries who superintended this work had themselves by this time cast aside all their former reserve, and now stood out in the eyes of the public as the great heresiarchs, and the chief leaders of the evangelical movement. Matthew on his accession earnestly recommended it to some evangelicals that waited on him that the Americans might proceed with great caution, and not make themselves conspicuous before the public; but such a course, heartily indorsed and pursued by the missionaries themselves at the beginning of their operations, did not longer "seem to be practicable." Toward the end of 1844 Matthew lodged the complaint directly with the missionaries that their work was attracting more of the public notice than was desirable, and inquired how long they proposed to remain in Turkey. Goodell made this reply to the patriarch's messenger:

Let there be so many and so good schools established in the nation, that ours shall not only cease to attract attention, but shall become unnecessary and be wholly forsaken.

Let there be so much and so good preaching in all the various churches that no one will ever think of coming again to hear us stammer in a foreign tongue.

Should he, or any other person, again ask how long we are going to stay, and how much longer they will have to bear with us, show them Isa. 6:11, 12, and say that when the prophet asked, "how long" he should prophesy, the Lord said, "Till the land be an utter desolation, and the inhabitants be removed far away"; but that we, by the grace of God, were going to stay and prophesy till the land should be greatly blessed, and the people brought very nigh and made very happy as "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

Just before resorting to violent measures Matthew had recourse to public debate. A number of private discussions had been held at Hasskeuy in the homes of various magnates in the spring and early summer of 1845, in which Tschamurjian (Deroyentz), later principal of the national college at Scutari, and Hachadurian, later pastor of the first evangelical church of Constantinople, had figured prominently as the spokesmen respectively of the church and of the reform party. These private discussions, while they had early been suppressed by the patriarch, had rendered imperative some show of reasonableness on the part of the champions of the church's orthodoxy. In November, therefore, Tschamurjian was directed to conduct public discussions at the patriarchate, and to publish two pamphlets, one discussing the church's doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and another the church's doctrine of transubstantiation.

Tschamurjian's pamphlets, however, like the public lectures which he delivered at the patriarchate on two successive Sundays, defeated their object by challenging a reply. The first of them was answered by the missionary Wood, the second by Hachadurian. One passage from the latter's tract is here quoted to illustrate the kind of argument that was now being used, and to show how open controversy had at this time taken the place of quiet gospel teaching:

In the very words used at the institution of the sacrament of the communion, Christ clearly declares his object in establishing it, when he says, "This do in remembrance of me." He does not say, "This do in sacrifice of me," nor, "This do for the pardon of the sins of the living and the dead." These are things which *you* add to the words of Christ. Christ appointed this ordinance, that it should remain in his church *in remembrance* of his sacrifice. We read, "As oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come" (I Cor. 11:26). The apostle says, "ye do show the Lord's death"; but *you* understand him to say, "ye do sacrifice the Lord." Christ says, "This do in remem-



brance of me"; but *you* understand him to say, "This do in order to manufacture me."

Seeing that expostulation and argument alike were of no avail, Matthew finally addressed himself to the task of suppression. More than one consideration seemed in favor of a persecution at this time. By the year 1846 it had been definitely ascertained that the numerical strength of the evangelical party was not great. The numbers of the reformers, formerly exaggerated by popular alarmists to some eight thousand, had been found to amount at most to a few hundred, and this number had further been reduced by the desertion in view of persecution of such friends of ecclesiastical reform as had been enlightened in their minds but had not been quickened in their consciences. In the second place, Horatio Southgate, missionary bishop of the American Episcopal church at Constantinople—a foreigner and a fellow-countryman of the other missionaries—made no secret of his sympathy for Matthew's plans of intolerance. Himself a ritualistic Episcopalian, the bishop regarded the evangelicals as rebels against the patriarch's apostolic succession, and their ideas as nothing but "a mixture of radicalism and infidelity," and when Matthew was considering the subject of anathema and excision, he encouraged him to adopt "reasonably coercive measures." Indeed, after the persecution of Protestants had begun "he labored with all his might to make the British ambassador believe that there was no persecution going on, but that only church discipline was being administered, with which no one ought to interfere."<sup>6</sup> That the see of Etchmiadzin also had a direct hand in the persecution which Matthew inaugurated, as Cyrus Hamlin firmly believed,<sup>7</sup> is not at this day easily decided; but this one thing

<sup>6</sup> *Autobiography of William G. Schauffler*, p. 188.

<sup>7</sup> *My Life and Times*, p. 284.

is certain that the ecclesiastical relations of the patriarchate of Constantinople to that see, suspended through the jealousy of the Turkish government since the transference of the territory about Etchmiadzin to Russia (1828), were restored only two months after Matthew's accession.

The patriarchal anathema first fell upon Vertanes Eznak Gregorian, commonly known as the priest Vertanes, who was at this time the most indefatigable and influential of the reformers.<sup>8</sup> But before we relate the circumstances of his excommunication it will be well for us to review briefly the antecedent career of the man.

The priest Vertanes was in the service of the church of Nicomedia when he attached himself to the little band of Bible readers that began to form in that city in 1832. Clerical opposition at Nicomedia compelled him in the spring of 1838 to go to Yenikeuy on the Bosphorus where a former associate, the priest Harutun (of whom we shall see more later), had preceded him toward the end of 1836. Stephen, who was then the reigning patriarch, and, as former bishop of the diocese of Nicomedia, an old acquaintance of the priests, repaired to the same village in the summer of that year; and the reformation of the Armenian church was often made by these men the subject of conversation, the patriarch heartily entering into the discussion, and even declaring "that many observances in their church were not Christianity, and that they would not probably exist ten years longer." In this secluded village Vertanes spent nearly two and one-half quiet years, unnoticed during the persecution of 1839, officiating in the village church, and often meeting with Panayotes (Goodell's Greek assistant) and Harutun for prayer.

<sup>8</sup> Sahakian was in America, receiving a theological education.

In 1840 Vertanes removed his residence to the city (the Musallah quarter of Stambul), the priest Harutun continuing a while longer at Yenikeuy before returning to his home in Nicomedia. In that year began for Vertanes a ministry extending over a period of many years, performed sometimes under the direction of the mission, sometimes independently, until his death in 1875, at the ripe age of eighty-seven years. From house to house and from shop to shop, wherever he could gain a hearing, Vertanes preached the doctrine of justification by faith. His office of confessor, also, gave him access to the women whom neither lay evangelist nor missionary could reach, and many an illiterate woman received from him her first lessons in the Bible.

Nor was Vertanes' mission confined to the capital. In two successive years, 1841 and 1842, he had occasion to visit Nicomedia and vicinity, and in 1843, Asia Minor and Armenia. This last missionary tour so irritated the patriarch Theodore that Vertanes was arrested on his return to Constantinople and exiled (December, 1843) to the Convent of Armash. Here, however, under the mild indifference of Stephen who had preceded him to the convent, he exerted such an influence over the inmates as to cause serious alarm at headquarters, and when Matthew succeeded to the patriarchal throne he was further exiled (February, 1845) to the Convent of St. Garabed at Cesarea. But Vertanes' presence proved not less dangerous to orthodoxy at Cesarea than it had been at Armash. Nine years afterward a missionary, writing on the occasion of the establishment of a mission station and the organization of a Protestant church in the city, said: "The seeds of reformation were sown here years ago, when bitter persecution banished the devoted Vertanes to this city. We have seen some of the fruits of his labors, and hope to see many more. They banished the man, but



not his religion. So great was his zeal that they were glad to recall him, lest all the Armenians should become Protestants."

In August, 1845, Vertanes was permitted to return to Constantinople by virtue of a general amnesty proclaimed on the occasion of the anniversary of the Sultan's accession to the throne, and thus it came that he was at the capital when the storm of 1846 burst upon the evangelicals. On January 23, 1846, one of the patriarch's beadles was ordered, with the chief municipal officer of the quarter of the city where Vertanes had his lodgings, to go and arrest the arch-heretic and to bring him before the supreme ecclesiastical authority. Vertanes, however, received warning in time to flee to Dwight's house in Pera, and the patriarch was cheated of a much-coveted opportunity to read the bull of excision and anathema in his hearing and to go through the solemn form of publicly divesting him of his priestly robes. On Sunday, January 25, at the close of the morning services, and before mass, the candles of the patriarchal church were extinguished, the great screen was drawn before the high altar, and a solemn bull of excision and anathema was read against Vertanes and all the "modern sectaries." In this document Matthew declared Vertanes a "wretched and unworthy" priest who,

following his carnal lusts, leaves the church and his sacred office, and, like a vagabond, going about through the metropolis and Nicomedia, babbles out errors, unworthy of his sacred office and dignity, and becomes an occasion of stumbling to many; and altogether throwing aside the holiness of faith, which he had received in the holy Catholic Armenian church, follows the erroneous doctrines of modern sectaries, and begins to preach errors in Nicomedia, Cesarea, Anatolia, and in Constantinople, and in every place where he sets his impious foot, and to overwhelm the simple people in spiritual destruction.

After speaking of the priest's obstinacy in not hearkening to the good counsels of his lordship, and of the danger to the spiritual welfare of his flock involved in the free access to the community of such "a traitor and murderer of Christ," the patriarch concluded:

Wherefore we expel him, and forbid him as a devil, and a child of the devil, to enter into the company of our believers; we cut him off from the priesthood by the Word of God as an amputated member of the spiritual body of Christ, and as a branch cut off from the vine, which is good for nothing, but to be cast into the fire. By this admonitory bull I, therefore, command and warn my beloved in every city, far and near, not to look upon his face, regarding it as the face of Belial; not to receive him into your holy dwellings, for he is a house-destroying and ravening wolf; not to receive his salutation, but as a soul-destroying and deadly poison; and to beware, with all your households, of similar seducing and impious followers of the false doctrine of modern sectaries, and to pray for them to the God who remembereth not iniquity, if, perchance, they may repent, and turn from their wicked ways, and find the salvation of their souls, through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who is blessed world without end. Amen.

One after another during the week that followed the excision of Vertanes, the evangelicals were called up by the patriarch and required to sign, on pain of excommunication, a paper of recantation, declaring that "being deceived by the wicked enticements of Satan," they had withdrawn from the fellowship of the "holy Armenian church," and had been "caught in the loose and soul-destroying doctrines of the new sectaries"; affirming "that the faith of the holy church is spotless, her sacraments divine, her rites of apostolic origin, her ritual pious"; and renouncing all further intercourse with the "new sectaries."

During the first week following the excision of Vertanes none of the evangelicals affixed his signature to this document, and on the following Sunday Matthew issued a more

emphatic anathema. His holiness again warned the pious against all those who harbored the sentiments of Vertanes in such terms as these:

Whoever has a son that is such a one, or a brother, or a partner [in business], and gives him bread, or assists him in making money, or has intercourse with him as a friend, or does business with him, let such persons know that they are nourishing a venomous serpent in their houses, which will one day injure them with its deadly poison, and they will lose their souls. Such persons give bread to Judas. Such persons are enemies of the holy faith of Christianity, and destroyers of the holy orthodox Armenian church, and a disgrace to the whole nation. Wherefore, their houses and shops are also accursed; and whoever goes to visit them, we shall learn and make them public in the holy church by terrible anathema.

On February 3 the evangelicals addressed an appeal to the patriarch. In this appeal they stated that they were not infidels or heretics as they had been called, but true believers in the gospel which the church herself receives. They made a brief declaration of their faith, professing their belief in the Trinity, in the Holy Spirit, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, "the only Savior of the world, and true High Priest, Mediator, and Intercessor for believers"; in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as "the perfect rule of the church"; in baptism in the name of the Trinity, and in the Lord's Supper "in commemoration of the death of our Lord." Finally they declared their acceptance of the Nicene Creed as the symbol of faith adopted by the entire church of Christ, and concluded:

Thus, for our not receiving things not plainly taught in the Holy Scriptures, esteeming it obstinacy and rebellion, will you call us enemies of our nation and destroyers of our church? We have no such design; but, in accordance with what Paul wrote to the Romans (Rom. 9:3), we love our nation to such a degree that we glory in being called Armenians; and we by no means acknowledge any other name, although we are commonly called



Protestants. But we again declare that we are Armenians by nation, Christians by faith, and obedient subjects of the Ottoman government. Nevertheless, if in religious or civil matters we be in error—for we do not claim to be infallible—we will gladly admit it, if you will deign to point out our error to us. You well know that the conviction of the human mind is effected only by the presentation of truth, not by the exercise of force; and in the fear of God we can do nothing against our conscience.

Lithographed copies of this appeal were scattered broadcast in the community. This was an epoch-making document. It raised the first clear protest ever heard in Turkey against religious intolerance. In view of that protest, if for no other cause, the evangelicals might have been called by the name which in this very document they repudiated—Protestants.

But the appeal went unheeded. From week to week the patriarchal anathemas thundered from the churches of the metropolis. Every Lord's Day some recalcitrant evangelicals who had refused to sign the paper of recantation were anathematized and excinded by name. In the course of four weeks about thirty were thus cast out of the church and delivered up to Satan. The first paper of recantation being thought too vague or conciliatory in its phraseology, it was replaced in the middle of February by another document commonly known as the "New Creed" of the patriarch Matthew. For the purpose of eliminating every person who held the evangelical doctrines nothing better could have been devised. It required assent to the following points: (1) Faith without works cannot save a man; and the proof of the correctness of a Christian's faith is not his good works, but the conformity of his confession to the creed of the universal church. (2) The visible church under the headship of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit "never has erred and never can err." (3) The sacraments of the church are seven

in number, namely, baptism, confirmation, penance, communion, ordination, matrimony, and extreme unction. (4) Ceremonial baptism is essential to salvation, and the unbaptized person "is out of the church, and has no salvation, even though he had never sinned at all"; confession to a priest with true repentance, and submission to the penance imposed by him, are indispensable to forgiveness and "eternal glory"; and the souls of such as die before having performed full penance for sins committed must be purified by the prayers of the church, the sacrifice of the mass, and the giving of special alms, to become worthy of "eternal glory." (5) "The mystery of the holy communion is the true body and blood of Christ," and "whoever does not partake of the communion in this belief is under eternal condemnation." (6) The Virgin is "Mother of God," perpetually a virgin, and "worthy of honor above all the saints"; "the intercession of the saints is acceptable to God, and their relics and anointed pictures are worthy of veneration"; and "the holy cross and the relics of saints" are unfailing instruments of God's wonder-working power. (7) "To believe in the church means, to believe those things which the universal holy church of Christ unitedly believes, and to believe them in the same way in which she believes." The true follower of the church must observe "her external ceremonies of piety and Christian rites, and all her requirements, as having been received by tradition from the holy apostles, and the holy fathers who came after them." (8) There are different grades of office in the church; and the patriarchs of every nation "are Christ's vicegerents, appointed to shepherd the holy church, and to superintend her discipline." (9) Those who declare that "error has entered into the faith unitedly received by the universal church," affirming the "Mother of God" to be only "Mother of Christ," and denying her perpetual virginity; condemning the ven-

eration of the "holy cross," the relics of saints, and anointed pictures, as idolatry, and denying the intercession of saints, are anathema, "as impious blasphemers of the Holy Spirit, and enemies of God and all his saints."

From the day following the excommunication of Vertanes, clergy and laity were intent upon putting down the heretics, and persecution began in earnest. Under the then organization of the trades in Turkey ecclesiastical discipline was a very effective means of civil oppression. All the various trades at Constantinople, as also in other large towns in Turkey, were in those days incorporated guilds, and the affairs of each guild were administered by a committee consisting of the wealthiest and most influential members of it. This committee, whose powers were often vested in a single individual known as the clerk of the guild, issued all licenses to trade upon the surety of one or more of the most important licensed tradesmen of the guild. The patriarchal anathema, by forbidding all intercourse between "the pious" and the "new sectaries," deprived the evangelicals of their surety and thereby withdrew their licenses to trade. About thirty-five men thus forfeited their licenses, and in consequence some of them were cast into jail, and some were compelled to make immediate settlement of their accounts with partners and creditors, incurring great financial loss.

But the commercial boycott was not all that the ban entailed. The ban involved also social ostracism, which was something of which the civil power could not take cognizance, and which therefore lasted for a much longer period than the other. Nearly seventy individuals at Constantinople were by virtue of the patriarchal anathema driven from their homes and forced to separate from father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife, or child, refused food or shelter, robbed, insulted, and injured by their own and by every Christian



sect in the city. Goodell thus described the condition of the evangelicals in the middle of March:

Many are driven from their homes, and denied a shelter or a drop of water from any sect; refused a place to live in, a place to die in, or a place to be buried in; unable to flee to a mountain or a cave for want of a passport; unable to work, for whoever employs them shares their fate; thrown into the filthiest prisons for want of security, and whoever offers himself for security is thrown in with them.<sup>9</sup>

But foreign sympathy came to the rescue of the evangelicals in the hour of their dire distress. The missionaries secured for them tenements where they found temporary shelter; and there they were cared for during the first months of the persecution by the contributions of Protestant sympathizers in England and America, in India and the Caucasus, in Denmark and Sweden and Norway, in Württemberg and Switzerland. Thus brought together by a common tribulation and a universal philanthropy, many of them hitherto total strangers to each other, they shared together their common trials and their common joys. Goodell's words give us an insight into the manner in which they bore up under their affliction:

They had days of public fasting and prayer, and the spectacle was an affecting one. Their songs of praise from the whole congregation went up like the sound of many waters, and reminded me of the singing of the ancient Bohemian brethren amidst the raging fires of persecution. And, indeed, to see them stand from day to day with such firmness on the Rock of eternal ages, unmoved and undismayed; to see them manifest such unshaken confidence in the power and wisdom and faithfulness of Christ; to see them take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they have in heaven a better and an enduring substance; to see them called up, one after another, from time to time, even women and children, and going alone, single-handed, cheerfully and fearlessly, into the presence of the greatest and craftiest of

<sup>9</sup> *Memoirs*, pp. 312 f.

their enemies, and there witnessing a good confession, to the utter confusion of their inquisitors—was a spectacle for angels and for men.<sup>10</sup>

Surely the noble words which one of the evangelicals at this time uttered voiced a sentiment which they all felt in common: "My daily prayer to God is, that even if there should not be left a single person except myself to witness for the truth, He would still give me faith to stand firm for the doctrine of salvation by grace in Christ alone. I know that all the resistance we now make to error we are making for coming generations."

Meanwhile the evangelicals were not helplessly idle. In the middle of February they sent in a petition to Reshid Pasha, minister of foreign affairs, refuting all charges of civil rebellion, pointing out the reason for their persecution as lying in their refusal to conform themselves to some usages of the national church like the worship of images and priestly absolution, and begging for the protection of the imperial government. In the following month they submitted a petition to the British, Prussian, and American diplomatic representatives, and finally one to the Sultan himself. At last, on March 12, Reshid Pasha summoned the patriarch to the Porte for an interview, with the result that Matthew publicly declared from the pulpit of the cathedral church: "Religion is free in Turkey!" And on May 17 the evangelicals were called up by the prefect of the police and informed that they were now authorized to resume their occupations and that their surety for each other would be deemed sufficient. The "vizierial letter" which authorized them, in the name of the Sultan, to open their shops, gave them that right as "Protestants." From this time forward the evangelicals were to be officially known by that name. This vizierial

<sup>10</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 311.

letter caused a cessation of all civil persecution of Protestants at Constantinople. At the same time it was the entering wedge for their civil emancipation.

The patriarch's "New Creed" went to the provinces at the same time that it was issued at the capital. At Nicomedia, Adabazar, Brusa, Smyrna, Trebizond, and Erzurum, the same document was submitted to the evangelicals for their signatures, and a refusal to comply was there, as it was at Constantinople, followed by the ban and the anathema. Persecution in the provinces was not less thoroughly organized than at the capital; and it often operated with greater severity because foreign interference was not easily obtained. Brusa and Smyrna,<sup>11</sup> in each of which two places four evangelicals were excommunicated, present the only exceptions to this general rule. At these two points no persecution was attempted.

We will take a rapid survey of events in the four other localities.

In the city of Trebizond, where a mission station had been established in 1835, nine were excommunicated. For many months after the anathema the evangelicals were subject to mob violence and imprisonment on false charges.

In the interior city of Erzurum, where a mission station had been established in the latter part of 1839, six were excommunicated. Here there were some fierce outbursts of mob violence. A vizierial letter, however, dated June 2, 1846, notified the pasha of Erzurum that persecution was no longer to be tolerated. It was the will of his imperial majesty the Sultan, with regard to those of his Armenian subjects who had embraced the Protestant faith, that "the patriarch should

<sup>11</sup> The mission station at Brusa was established in 1834 originally for the Greek population of the city; that at Smyrna was established in the year preceding, when the mission press at Malta was removed thither.



be forbidden to interfere in their religious or personal affairs; and that all concerned, when sureties were offered by them from among the various communities, should accept them; and that thus there should be no hindrance to their pursuing their occupations and gaining their living."<sup>12</sup> After the evangelicals of Constantinople, those of Erzurum were the first thus to receive government protection.

In Adabazar<sup>13</sup> the evangelicals suffered persecution at the hands of the ecclesiastical authorities in the winter of 1844-45; and when in 1846 orders came from the patriarchate to renew the persecution, mob violence also became common. But when in the latter part of July the arrival of a missionary occasioned renewed disturbance in the town and the evangelicals were arraigned before the kadi for intercourse with the foreigner, their declaration that they were Armenians by nationality, evangelical Christians by faith, and loyal subjects of the Ottoman Porte, elicited this answer from that dignitary: "We cannot interfere with your excommunication; but so long as you abide by the declaration you have now made, we will protect you civilly. Your goods shall be as our goods, your houses as our houses, and your persons as our persons. Go in peace." On the following day, Sunday, July 26, twenty-four of the evangelicals in the town were excommunicated by name. On the same night an evangelical church was organized in Adabazar.

In Nicomedia twelve of the evangelicals were prevailed upon by the ex-patriarch Stephen to sign the "New Creed," the bishop declaring that he only wanted their signatures "as a matter of form." Soon, however, a missionary visitor

<sup>12</sup> *Missionary Herald*, September, 1846, p. 302.

<sup>13</sup> The evangelical movement at Adabazar originated from the gift of a New Testament in modern Armenian and a few tracts by Dwight and Hamlin to a certain native of that town, Erizian by name, on a visit to Nicomedia in the summer of 1840.

came to Nicomedia. He urged upon them what he deemed to be their duty. "They had the blood of souls clinging to them; for they had borne a public testimony to the falsehood of the gospel." Their consciences did not rest until they had drawn up a declaration of their faith, had submitted it to the bishop, and had been excommunicated with a few others who had stood firm in their faith. One of these was the priest Harutun Baltasarian. Those two priests, Vertanes and Harutun, while intimate friends, were in temperament at opposite poles. While the former was the man of action, the latter was rather of a scholarly and meditative turn of mind. Extremely modest and retiring, Harutun, contrary to his own conscience and to the repeated entreaties of his missionary friends, had for years been outwardly conforming himself to the usages of the church in the fulfilment of his priestly functions. But the excommunication of Vertanes and the subsequent persecution compelled him to take a determined stand for the truth as he saw it. Stephen had received orders from Constantinople to anathematize and excommunicate all who belonged to the evangelical party in his diocese. Harutun, as one of the public suspects in Nicomedia, was among the first to be examined with reference to his religious convictions. Thrice Stephen counseled and warned him. Then he called upon him to write out a confession of his faith which should be publicly read in church in order to clear him of the suspicion of heresy. Harutun, however, not content with a positive declaration of his faith which he drew up according to the bishop's request, addressed to him in addition a letter which set forth in unmistakable terms his position with regard to the teachings of the church. "All her demands," said he, "which accord with the Holy Scriptures, being infallible, I receive. But whatever rival ceremonial demands the church makes, in view of what the

apostle threatens, saying, 'If we or an angel from heaven, even, shall preach any other gospel, let him be accursed,' I fear to receive." This letter threw his enemies into a frenzy of rage. On the following Sunday, February 8, Harutun was conducted to the church, and Stephen publicly read his statements, and pronounced him excommunicated and anathema. "No more Harutun for us! No more Harutun!" reiterated the bishop in the hearing of an enraged congregation, while the meek priest, sitting in his corner near the high altar, quietly retorted, "There *is* a Harutun;<sup>14</sup> there *is* a Judgment!" Two priests stepped forward and violently tore off Harutun's clerical robes, and then the rabble fell upon him and with kicks and blows drove him into the street as a rejected member of the body of Christ. The shearing of his sacerdotal beard completed his disgrace, and imprisonment served to fill up the measure of his penalty. And thus he was compelled to turn his back upon the church he had loved so long and so well. Harutun's parishioners declared that they would not have another priest in his place. But to seek to be reinstated in the priesthood was not his purpose. "They plunged me into the waters," he said; "I struggled against the tide; but before I could take a breath, they pushed me in, again and again, till I was drowned. And now I am dead to my former character and position. I obtained a new life in Christ."

<sup>14</sup> *Harutun* means "resurrection." As a proper name it is the equivalent of the Greek Anastasius.



## CHAPTER IV

### ORGANIZATION

FOR nearly five months from the excommunication of Vertanes, the patriarch's anathemas resounded in the churches of the metropolis. When new names failed him, Matthew reanathematized the old ones. Finally, on June 21, 1846, on the occasion of the festival of Etchmiadzin, he issued a bull of perpetual excommunication and anathema against all Protestants, to be publicly read at every annual return of that festival throughout the churches. And what had occurred in western Europe at the time of the Great Reformation was now repeated on a smaller scale in the Armenian church: the reformers, originally a party within the church, excluded from the church's fellowship and ordinances, found themselves under the necessity of forming a rival organization outside the church.

The members of the Evangelical Union having addressed to the missionaries at Constantinople a written request for counsel and aid in the organization of an independent church, on June 25, 1846, a conference was convened at the capital of all missionaries of the American Board, and a few others competent to the deliberations proposed, and a constitution was drawn up for the Armenian Evangelical Church about to be organized. This constitution provided for a form of government half-way between Congregationalism and Presbyterianism. The officers of the church were to be bishops or pastors, and deacons, chosen by the male members of the local church, and set apart to their office by prayer and the laying on of hands. The disciplinary authority of the local church was to be vested in a church session or standing committee, composed of the deacons and three or

more representatives of the people, and presided over by the pastor. The congregation of male members was to have the right of revision in all matters of discipline, and a body composed of the pastors and delegates of the associated churches was to be the final court of appeal. A pastor was to be responsible only to this body. All Christian discipline being spiritual in its nature, anathema and temporal penalty were not to be resorted to under any circumstances.<sup>15</sup> The doctrine of the church was embodied in a confession of faith composed of twelve articles to which all candidates for church membership were publicly to express their assent. This confession, framed in the very heat of the battle between the evangelical and the orthodox ideas of Christian truth, deserves here to be verbally reproduced:

1. Do you believe in the existence of one only living and true God, the creator, preserver, and governor of the universe; omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent; self-existent, independent, immutable; possessed of infinite benevolence, wisdom, holiness, justice, mercy, and truth, and who is the only proper object of worship?

2. Do you believe that God exists in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and that these three are one God?

3. Do you believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and are a revelation of his will to men, and the sufficient and only rule of faith and practice?

4. Do you believe that mankind, in their natural state, are destitute of holiness, and totally depraved and justly exposed to the wrath of God?

5. Do you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, perfect God and perfect Man, is the only Savior of sinners, and the only Mediator

<sup>15</sup> This form of government was later somewhat altered. The discipline of the local church was directly vested in the body of its male members, the church session having no more than advisory powers. It was provided that matters of discipline should in case of necessity be appealed to a representative body of associated churches whose authority should be final; but presbyterial organization and government were left to local discretion. See *Guide for Members of the Evangelical Church*, pp. 33, 45, 54, 57.

and Intercessor between God and man; and that by his perfect obedience, sufferings, and death, he made full atonement for sin, so that all who believe in him will assuredly be saved; and that there is no other sacrifice for sin?

6. Do you believe that in consequence of the utter wickedness of man, it is necessary that all should be regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit, in order to be saved?

7. Do you believe that we are justified by the righteousness of Christ alone, through faith, and not by any fastings, alms, penances, or other deeds of our own; and that while good works are inseparable from a true and living faith, they can never be the meritorious ground of salvation before God?

8. Do you believe that holiness of life, and a conscientious discharge of the various duties we owe to God, to our fellowmen, and to ourselves, are not only constantly binding upon all believers, but essential to the Christian character?

9. Do you believe that, besides God, no other being is to be worshiped and adored, and that all three persons of the sacred Trinity are worthy of our worship, which, to be acceptable, must be offered through no other mediation than that of Jesus Christ the only Mediator; and that the use of relics, crosses, pictures, and images of any sort, in any act of worship, and of the intercession of the saints, is directly opposed to the Scriptures, and highly displeasing to God; and that prayer for the dead is not authorized in the Word of God?

10. Do you believe that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, and a day of judgment; and that the happiness of the righteous, and the punishment of the wicked, commence at death, and continue forever?

11. Do you believe that any number of true Christians, duly organized, constitute a Church of Christ, of which Christ is the only Head; and that the only sacraments of the church are baptism and communion; baptism being the seal of the covenant, and a sign of the purifying operation of the Holy Spirit, and the token of admission into the visible church; and the communion, in showing forth by visible symbols the death of Christ, being a perpetual memento of his atoning love, and a pledge of union and communion with him and with all true believers?

12. Do you believe that the preaching of the gospel is the great instrument which Christ appointed for the conversion of men and for the edification of his people, and that it is the duty of his



church to carry into effect the Savior's command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"?

This constitution was formally adopted by the evangelicals of Constantinople on July 1, 1846. On that day they assembled in the mission chapel at Pera.<sup>16</sup> After Scripture-reading and prayer the constitution was read in their hearing and each article explained. A vote was then taken on the articles of government and discipline, and afterward the evangelicals were called upon to give their assent to the confession of faith, which they did as they rose to their feet, and declared, "We do thus believe." Then, a form of covenant having been assented to, the missionaries, Dwight, Goodell, Schauffler, Homes, Hamlin, Wood, and Van Lennap, and other ministers of the gospel who were present by invitation, arose and in behalf of all evangelical churches acknowledged the new organization thus constituted "as a true church of Jesus Christ." The names of the members of this First Armenian Evangelical Church of Constantinople—of whom there were forty, all with three exceptions males—were then enrolled, after which the church proceeded to the election of officers. Absalom Hachadurian, afterward called Utijian, was elected first pastor of this church.

On the basis of the above-described constitution evangelical churches were organized by the missionaries during the months of July and August in Nicomedia, Adabazar, and Trebizond, the churches in the first two places named being composed each of fourteen members, the church in Trebizond of nine. At the end of a year the infant church of Constantinople had more than doubled its membership, and the aggregate membership of the four churches was about one hundred and forty, while the total number of Arme-

<sup>16</sup> The mission chapel was in Dwight's hired house, opposite the grounds of the British embassy.

nians, including men, women, and children, who had withdrawn from the national church was over one thousand.

After the consummation of their ecclesiastical organization, their civil recognition by the Turkish government was made the important object of endeavor by the evangelicals. A meeting of the "Protestant Nation" was called at Constantinople on August 17, 1846, when an executive committee of four was appointed to represent the community in its "external relations." On June 16, 1847, this committee passed the following resolution: "Resolved, That we submit a petition to our Lord the Padishah requesting our separation from the Armenian community and the granting of a berat [charter] similar to the berat of the other communities." Four petitions on the subject of this resolution were sent in to the Sultan within the space of a few months.

However, but for the mediation of the British embassy, the petitions of the Protestants might have gone unheeded. To Lord Cowley (Hon. H. R. Wellesley), who occupied the post of Sir Stratford Canning, afterward Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, during a temporary visit of the latter in England, belongs the honor of obtaining, on November 15, 1847, the first imperial iradé recognizing the Protestants of Turkey as a separate community and granting them freedom of conscience and worship.<sup>17</sup>

But it was not until the year 1850 that the rights and privileges of the Protestant community were permanently defined by imperial firman and the Protestants were authorized to elect a chancellor or civil head.<sup>18</sup> Pursuant to a resolution

<sup>17</sup> It may here be observed that the recognition of a Protestant community in Turkey secured freedom of conscience for Protestants of all races throughout the Ottoman dominions, and not for Armenian Protestants alone.

<sup>18</sup> While Stephen Seropian was by the iradé of 1847 appointed *Vekeel* or Civil Head of the Protestant community, he was actually authorized to serve only under the title of *Kapu Oghlan*, or Agent at the Porte, and the general oversight of

passed on July 31, 1849, the Executive Committee of the Protestant community at Constantinople had sent in a petition to the British ambassador asking him to use his influence to secure the sanction of the Porte for the appointment of a civil head for the Protestant community. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, the great champion of religious liberty in Turkey,<sup>19</sup> who was at this time back at his post at Constantinople, accordingly mediated for the Protestants at the Sublime Porte, and on November 27, 1850, secured from Sultan Abdul Medjid an imperial firman, which rendered into English reads as follows:

To my Vizier, Mohammed Pasha, Prefect of the Police at my Capital, the honorable Minister and glorious Counselor, the Model of the World, and Regulator of the Affairs of the Community, who, directing the public interests with sublime prudence, consolidating the structure of the empire with wisdom, and strengthening the columns of its prosperity and glory, is the recipient of every grace from the Most High. May God prolong his glory!

When this sublime and august Mandate reaches you, let it be known that,

the civil affairs of the community was committed to Izzet Pasha, comptroller of the city revenue. The Kapu Oghlan was elected by the community annually.

<sup>19</sup> Lord Stratford was involved in 1843-44 in a dispute with the Porte by virtue of which he found himself committed thenceforward to the defense of religious liberty in Turkey. The dispute referred to was over the execution of Joachim, an Armenian young man, for "apostasy" from Islam (Joachim through fear had professed Mohammedanism, and had later returned to his old faith), and it resulted in the British ambassador's securing from the Sultan in a private audience on March 23, 1844, this personal assurance: "Henceforward neither shall Christianity be insulted in my dominions, nor shall Christians be in any way persecuted for their religion." On the strength of this promise, Sir Stratford demanded toleration for the Protestant Armenians in 1846; and it was mainly through his influence that such toleration was gradually secured. The successive steps in the civil emancipation of the evangelicals prior to the promulgation of the iradé of 1847 were marked by the following events: The shops of the boycotted evangelicals of Constantinople are ordered opened (May, 1846); a vizierial letter is secured in behalf of the persecuted evangelicals of Erzurum (July); a warrant for a Protestant burial is issued by the government at the capital (August); the first Protestant marriage is solemnized at Constantinople without the patriarch's voucher (January, 1847).



Whereas, Hitherto those of my Christian subjects who have embraced the Protestant faith, in consequence of their not being under any specially appointed superintendence, and in consequence of the patriarchs and primates of their former sects, which they have renounced, naturally not being able to attend to their affairs, have suffered much inconvenience and distress; and

Whereas, In necessary accordance with my Imperial compassion, which is the support of all, and which is manifested to all classes of my subjects, it is contrary to my Imperial pleasure that any one class of them should be exposed to suffering; and

Whereas, By reason of their faith, the above-mentioned are already a separate community,

Therefore, it is my Royal compassionate will, that, by all means, measures be adopted for facilitating the administration of their affairs, so that they may live in peace, quiet, and security.

Let, then, a respectable and trustworthy person, acceptable to and chosen by themselves, from among their own number, be appointed, with the title of "Agent of the Protestants," who shall be attached to the Prefecture of the Police.

It shall be the duty of the Agent to have under his charge the register of the members of the community, which shall be kept at the police; and the Agent shall cause to be registered therein all births and deaths in the community. And all applications for passports and marriage licenses, and all petitions on affairs concerning the community that are to be presented to the Sublime Porte, or to any other department, must be given in under the official seal of the Agent.

For the execution of my will, this my Imperial Sublime Mandate and August Command has been especially issued and given from my Sublime Chancery.

Hence, you, the minister above named, according as it has been explained above, will execute to the letter the preceding ordinance; only, as the collection of the capitation tax and the delivery of passports are subject to particular regulations, you will not do anything contrary to those regulations. You will not permit anything to be required of them, on pretense of fees or on other pretenses, for marriage licenses or registration. You will see to it that like the other communities of the empire, in all their affairs, such as the procuring of cemeteries and places of worship, they have every facility and every needed assistance. You will not permit that any of the other communities shall in

any way interfere with their edifices, or with their worldly matters or concerns, or, in short, with any of their affairs, either secular or religious, that thus they may be free to exercise the usages of their faith.

And it is enjoined upon you not to allow them to be molested an iota in these particulars, or in any others; and that all attention and perseverance be put in requisition to maintain them in quiet and security. And, in case of necessity, they shall be free to make representations regarding their affairs through their Agent to the Sublime Porte.

When this my Imperial will shall be brought to your knowledge and appreciation, you will have this August Decree registered in the proper department, and then give it over to remain in the hands of these my subjects. And see you to it, that its requirements be always in future performed in their full import.

Thus know you, and respect my sacred signet!

Written in the holy month of Moharrem, year of the Hegira 1267.

Given in the well-guarded city of Constantinople.

On his own invitation a delegation of thirteen men from the Protestant community waited on the British ambassador on the day following the issuance of this imperial firman. Lord Stratford communicated to these men the contents of the decree, and addressed them for three-quarters of an hour, at times with much emotion. He told them that the eyes of the world were upon them, because they were the first in Turkey to be freed from the bondage of superstition and to know the gospel in its purity, and exhorted them ever to adhere to the ideals of the gospel of Christ, maintaining a high standard of citizenship among themselves and of brotherly deportment toward the other sects of the land. On December 13, 1850, at a popular meeting of the Protestant community at Constantinople, this firman was publicly read, and Stephen Seropian, a brother to ex-Patriarch Jacob, who since 1847 had been acting as agent at the Porte, was elected civil head of the community.

It is not to be supposed that the imperial decrees of emancipation secured the immediate cessation of all persecution. Organized persecution was no longer in order when the first of them had been issued. But it is not in the nature of imperial edicts to overcome bigotry, and passion, and prejudice. Wherever the new sect was first introduced it had to make a place for itself against more or less violent opposition on the part of the people; and for a number of years after the emancipation of the Protestant community, those who professed evangelical sentiments were subject to petty persecutions not only in provinces far removed from the imperial city, but to some extent in that city itself.

A notable outburst of popular fanaticism against Protestants occurred in the year 1860 in the Balat quarter of Constantinople, where a mob kept possession of the Armenian cemetery for four days and nights, and ultimately, in the face of government officers and foreign ambassadors, succeeded in preventing the interment of the remains of Garabed Mirikelam, a charter member of the First Evangelical Church of Constantinople, in consecrated ground. Mirikelam's body was buried by Turkish hands in the public highway. But the consequence of this event was that all Protestants throughout the empire were thereafter allowed to have their own burying-grounds, as also the imperial firman had provided ten years before.

An account of the beginnings of Armenian Protestantism would not be complete without at least briefly relating the events which led up to the establishment of Protestantism among the Turkish-speaking Armenians of the region of Aintab. The pioneer in this field was the vartabed Peter Jizmejian, who was won to the Protestant cause through intercourse with evangelicals at Constantinople in 1842. Peter was the very first man to be taken in hand by the



crafty Matthew. He had refused to offer the sacrifice of the mass, and had in so doing betrayed his evangelical convictions. Matthew offered him a charge on the Russian frontier, hoping thus to remove him from the capital, and upon Peter's declining the offer urged him to go to the Armenian monastery at Jerusalem. Peter left Constantinople in the fall of 1844, but not to go as far as Jerusalem. Divesting himself on the way of his sacerdotal beard and robes, he proceeded to Beirut. Azariah Smith, missionary of the American Board, then in Syria, presently made his acquaintance and offered to employ him as colporteur in the region of Aintab, Killis, and Aleppo. Peter accepted this offer, and did faithful work. He had not been long in the field before he reported a rapid sale of books, and a good degree of religious interest. Besides Peter, a certain traveling vartabed, Michael by name, labored at Aintab for a short time. Michael appeared in the city in the spring of 1845. He soon came to be regarded as an eloquent preacher and a fearless reformer. On three different occasions he preached to large congregations in the Armenian church of the city against the confessional, the worship of saints, and other like essentials of Armenian orthodoxy; and when the doors of the church were finally closed against him, he preached to large audiences in private houses, and continued the agitation until the local ecclesiastical authorities effected his expulsion from the city. Michael on his journey westward through Asia Minor after a time fell into disrepute among the evangelicals on account of an appetite for intoxicating drink; but his agitation at Aintab had served a good purpose. In the summer of 1846 several of the most prominent men of Aintab signed a letter addressed to the missionaries at Beirut, petitioning in behalf of two hundred families for a regularly appointed missionary to instruct them in the Scriptures; and in January, 1848, the year pre-

ceding his death, Peter saw a church of eight members organized in that city. In October of the same year Azariah Smith established there a mission station. In May of the following year Benjamin Schneider of the Brusa station joined him. Then began a period of great missionary activity for the evangelicals of Aintab. Men uneducated but "full of faith and courage" were sent out with their tools in one hand and the Bible in the other to proclaim the gospel in the regions around. Eleven times these lay evangelists were driven out from Marash alone; but they entered the city for the twelfth time and stayed. From Aintab as a center the evangelical movement thus spread to Kessab, Killis, Urfa, Marash, and Adana. Already in 1850 it could be stated that the number of Protestants in the region of Aintab was as great as in all the rest of the empire, if not actually greater. When in 1861 Dwight visited this field, the church of Aintab had over two hundred and fifty communicants on its roll, more than a thousand attended its weekly services, and a Sunday school of over sixteen hundred men, women, and children had been gathered in by its workers. The Protestant community in Marash compared favorably with that in Aintab.

The ten years following the Protestant emancipation were years of unprecedented growth for the Armenian missions of the American Board. When we look at the statistics given by the board for those missions at the opening of the year 1850, we find that the Armenian work was not then great in its scope. The board at that time reports seven mission stations in the Armenian field—Constantinople, Bebek, Brusa, Smyrna, Trebizond, Erzurum, and Aintab; six outstations—Nicomedia, Adabazar, Rodosto, Diarbekir, Urfa, and Cesarea; eighteen missionaries and twenty female assistant missionaries; five native pastors and one native preacher;

twenty native teachers and other helpers; eight churches, two of them at Constantinople, with an aggregate membership of about two hundred and forty souls; two seminaries with nearly fifty students of both sexes, and seven free schools with about one hundred and ten pupils. But before the end of the year, came the promulgation of the imperial firman, and the whole country was opened up to missionary operations. The anathemas of Matthew had already served the purpose of heralding in remote corners of the empire the presence of the new doctrines; and the edict of 1850 everywhere awakened a general readiness to listen to the preaching of the Protestants. About one hundred towns and villages around Aintab, Marash, Urfa, Diarbekir, Arabgir, Agn, Sivas, Cesarea, Tocat, and Marsovan began to give signs of an awakening, and from remote localities came requests to the missionaries for preachers of the gospel. Sahakian wrote in 1852,<sup>20</sup> while on an eight months' missionary tour in Armenia: "I am not aware that I have yet visited a single place where Armenians are found, where there is not either an actual awakening, or a preparation of mind for the reception of the truth." When the tour had been completed he expressed the opinion that in that same year forty preachers of the gospel were absolutely needed, and that in the following year twice that number would barely meet the needs of the field. The work was pushed forward, and by the year 1860 the field had become so extensive as to necessitate its subdivision into three separate missions, namely, the Western Turkey Mission (including what was afterward the European Turkey Mission), the Central Turkey Mission, and the Eastern Turkey Mission. For these three missions combined

<sup>20</sup> Sahakian returned to his native land in 1848, after five years of study in the United States, and was at the time in question pastor of the evangelical church at Adabazar. Later he served churches at Constantinople, Bardezag and Nicomedia, and died in 1865.



the board at the beginning of that year reports as follows: Twenty-three stations;<sup>21</sup> sixty-five outstations; over fifty male missionaries and about as many female assistant missionaries; about one hundred and eighty native teachers, preachers, and other helpers; forty evangelical churches with a total membership of nearly thirteen hundred souls; seven pastors and thirty-three unordained preachers; two higher schools of learning with about ninety students of both sexes, and one hundred free schools with about twenty-eight hundred pupils, of whom not a small proportion came from orthodox families.

Such was the early progress of Protestantism among the Armenians of Turkey. Matthew, who as patriarch had said, "I will labor until my death for the extermination of Protestantism in my nation," lived to see it all. Faithful also to his declaration, he fought the new heresy to the very last. In 1858 he was elected catholicos of all the Armenians, and escorted with great pomp and ceremony to the supreme patriarchal seat at Etchmiadzin. But he met in Russian Armenia the same pestilential heresy that had ruffled the peace of his mind in Turkey. The mission of the Evangelical Missionary Society of Basel at Shusha, established with imperial sanction in 1823 by Dittrich and Zarembo, although suppressed by imperial ukase in 1835, had borne its fruit. Sergius Hampartsumian, a young man of Schamakhi originally enlightened upon a visit of Zarembo's to his native town in 1828, and later educated in the Russian Baltic province of Esthonia among German evangelical friends, had in 1842 established in Schamakhi a school which had become

<sup>21</sup> These stations were located at the following points: Constantinople, Smyrna, Bardezag, Tocat, Sivas, Cesarea, Yozgat, Marsovan, Adrianople, Philippopolis, and Eski-Zagra, in the Western Turkey Mission; Aintab, Marash, Urfa, Aleppo, and Antioch, in the Central Turkey Mission; Mosul, Diarbekir, Merdin, Bitlis, Erzurum, Arabgir, and Harput, in the Eastern Turkey Mission.

a strong evangelistic agency. Throughout the pontificate of the catholicos Nerses his heresy had spread unchecked. Now it devolved upon Matthew to defend the interests of orthodoxy. On May 7, 1861, Matthew issued a bull of excommunication against the Protestants at Schamakhi, inflicting penalties similar to those following upon his anathemas in Turkey. Subsequently, by an order of the governor of the Caucasus, the Grand Duke Michael, signed January 12, 1865, the evangelical community in Schamakhi, numbering over three hundred men, women, and children, was permitted to attach itself to the Evangelical Lutheran Consistory of Moscow, on condition that it would maintain no relations with the German colonies in Georgia or any missionary bodies abroad. Matthew died in the following September, having just witnessed a second victory of the new sect, which, spreading rapidly in Baku, Tiflis, Shusha, Alexandrapol, and Erivan, was one day to build up a strong community in Valarshabad itself, at the very gates of Etchmiadzin.

This chapter should not be brought to a close without a special notice of the missionary Dwight, the "father of the Armenian mission."

Harrison Gray Otis Dwight was born at Conway, Mass., in the year 1803. His parents removed not long after his birth to Utica in the state of New York, where at the age of fifteen he was converted in a revival and became a communicant in the Third Presbyterian Church. He was graduated at Hamilton College in 1825, and at Andover Theological Seminary three years later. While in the latter institution he offered himself to the American Board and was assigned to the mission of the Levant. He was ordained at Great Barrington, Mass., in 1829, and sailed from Boston on January 21, 1830. He arrived at Malta on the 27th of the following month. The researches of Smith and Dwight in Armenia

were undertaken in March, 1830, and occupied somewhat more than a year. At the end of that time the missionary explorers returned to Malta, and Dwight there received instructions to join Goodell at Constantinople. He arrived at Constantinople June 5, 1832; and from that time onward for almost thirty years the Turkish capital was the scene of his labors. He was killed in a railroad accident at Shaftesbury, Vermont, January 25, 1862.

The uniformity of Dwight's life as a missionary was broken by few incidents. Except when some short exploring tour, or a visit to some town otherwise destitute of missionary influence, or an occasional visit to his own native land, called him away for a time, he was steadily employed at Constantinople teaching, and preaching, and expounding the Scriptures. And therein lies the significance of his life with reference to the evangelical movement. For thirty years he was the foremost religious instructor and guide of the inner circle of Armenian evangelicals; and thus he became what Sahradian termed him, "the chief founder of the Apostolic and Evangelical Church of Armenia."

By the time those thirty years were numbered Dwight's eyes seemed to see "the salvation of the Lord." In January, 1861, eight months before his final return to his native land, he undertook a tour of inspection over the entire field which the missions of the American Board then occupied in Turkey, and more than once he expressed his readiness to say like Simeon of old, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." There was a keen sense of satisfaction in his words:

I have now completed my work. I have visited every station of the Board actually occupied in the Turkish and Persian empires, excepting those among the Bulgarians. It has been my privilege to see all the missionaries and their families,—a rare



body of men and women, of whom our churches and our country may well be proud,—and also to become personally acquainted with hundreds and thousands of the dear Protestant brethren and sisters of this land—God's lights in the midst of surrounding darkness, God's witnesses where the very seat of Satan is.

## CHAPTER V

### WHY A PROTESTANT ARMENIAN CHURCH?

THE missions of the American Board to the oriental churches, more specifically the missions to the Armenian church, were originally committed to a policy of strict non-proselytism—a policy which had for its sole aim the instilling into those churches of evangelical ideas and ideals without alienating any of their members from them. The “instructions” of the Prudential Committee of the board to Cyrus Hamlin, delivered on the eve of his departure for the Levant in 1838, dealing with the subject of the oriental churches, declared emphatically: “Our object is not to subvert them; not to pull down, and built up anew. It is to reform them; to revive among them . . . the knowledge and spirit of the gospel.”<sup>22</sup>

The considerations which conspired to commend such a policy were various. In the first place the American Board was originally to a certain degree a non-sectarian organization: it represented not only New England Congregationalism, but also the Presbyterian and the Dutch and Associate Reformed churches. Further, any appearance of proselytism was sure to awaken the authorities of the oriental churches to challenge the missionaries’ right of residence in Turkey and thus to imperil the missions of the board in the empire; for, while only in the year preceding the arrival of Goodell at Constantinople a treaty of friendship had been concluded

<sup>22</sup> *Missionary Herald*, January, 1839, p. 41. Goodell virtually acknowledged his action in receiving Bishop Dionysius and the vartabed Gregory into the mission church at Beirut in 1827 as a mistake of his early years of inexperience, when in 1835 he wrote: “When I first came into these countries, I laid hold of individuals, and endeavored to pull them out of the fire; but my aim is now to take hold of whole communities, and, as far as possible, to raise them all up to ‘sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.’” See Prime, *Goodell's Memoirs*, p. 179.

between the United States and the Porte, it was generally understood to be strictly commercial in its nature and provisions.<sup>23</sup> Again, by pursuing a proselyting policy the missionaries would run the risk of losing the support of an enlightened element in the native community, who, while desirous of a reformation in the church, would not countenance secession under any circumstances.<sup>24</sup> Finally, it was held that a campaign of evangelism without proselytism promised success in the case of the oriental churches as it did not in the case of the Church of Rome. To the formation of this conviction the English missionary societies which preceded the American Board in the lands of the East largely contributed. On the testimony of these societies, while the Church of Rome, intrrenched behind a doctrine of the supreme authority of the Pope in matters of faith and practice, afforded as a church no avenue of approach to Protestant evangelism, the oriental churches, holding, tacitly at least, to the final authority of the Bible, were essentially evangelical in character and easily accessible to the Protestant missionary, and possessed in themselves a sufficient basis of internal reform. And the pioneer missionaries of the American Board in the Levant readily fell in with this view. Eli Smith, writing from Malta early in 1830, spoke of the opposition met with by the mission in the Levant at the hands of the Church of Rome, and then added:

<sup>23</sup> It was not Mr. Porter alone who held that American missionaries had as such no treaty rights in Turkey (see above, p. 12, note). Goodell himself long labored under the conviction that the missionaries had no right, under the existing treaty, to ask their legation to secure the protection of the Turkish government for their schools. See Prime, *Goodell's Memoirs*, pp. 176 f. Perhaps, however, he was largely influenced in his views on this subject by Mr. Porter's own position.

<sup>24</sup> As an actual fact several friends of the reform party deserted when they discovered that the missionaries and their board were weighing the possibilities of secession. See Dwight, *Christianity Revived in the East*, pp. 127 f.



*The spirit of the other churches is essentially different*, and we are determined not to call them forth into opposition by a proselyting and controversial course. Our object is not to pull down or build up a sect, but to make known and inculcate the great fundamental truths of the gospel.<sup>25</sup>

In their pursuit of this policy the American missionaries at Constantinople at the first avoided all controversy, improved every opportunity to convey the impression to the native Christians that they were not in Turkey with any sectarian objects at heart, and bent their energies to the task of publication and education. Goodell came to Constantinople with a supply of Testaments and tracts of a non-controversial character. On his arrival he sought to secure the adoption of improved methods of primary instruction in the common schools of the city, advocating, and introducing into many of the schools the then modern and improved system which went by the name of Lancasterian. In the fall of 1834 a mission high school was opened at Pera—the first institution of higher learning among the Armenians of Constantinople—and presently the first impulses were given by the American missionaries to female education among the Armenians of the Turkish capital. These early efforts were all based on the theory that what the oriental churches needed above all things else was not more sectarian controversy, but more enlightenment of the kind calculated to arouse a widespread interest in the Word of God.

We have seen, however, that fifteen years from the founding of the Armenian mission the missionaries of the American Board in Turkey were compelled, contrary to their original plan, to establish an independent evangelical church.

There was an immediate cause for this, but we must not seek it, as is sometimes done, in the *persecution* of 1846. The

<sup>25</sup> *Missionary Herald*, June, 1830, p. 177.

year 1846 was the year of the greatest persecution of the evangelicals, but not the only year of their persecution: the evangelicals suffered their first official persecution in 1839; they endured much petty persecution also from 1841 onward. Further, it should be noted that all official persecution in 1846 had ceased before the first of the evangelical churches was organized. The immediate cause for the organization of the evangelical church in Turkey lay in the excision, final and irrevocable, of the evangelicals.

But it is not to be supposed that the founding of Protestantism in Turkey as a separate sect was the result of a sudden emergency. It is but a partial view of the matter which lays the entire responsibility for the organization of the Armenian Evangelical Church at the door of the patriarch Matthew and his advisers. While the excision of the Protestants served as the immediate cause and public justification of the founding of the Protestant Armenian church, it was not the ultimate cause of it. Back of the immediate cause for schism lay ultimate causes—causes which led the missionaries to look forward to the establishment of a Protestant church in Turkey for some years previous to 1846, and to regard a strict adherence to their original policy of non-proselytism as impracticable.

What were the causes which conspired to discourage the missionaries' adherence to their original policy of non-proselytism, and to effect its final abandonment? Four causes may be given.

1. *The pressure of a popular demand in the home churches for tangible results.*—What we may know on this phase of our subject is to be learned only by "reading between the lines" of the published correspondence of the mission in the Levant. But probably we shall not far miss the mark if we say that the pressure of popular impatience at home (and the

home churches were more impatient in the early days of modern missionary endeavor than at the present time) to a certain extent influenced the missionaries to abandon the more obscure and intangible work of quietly enlightening the oriental churches, and to adopt a method and policy which promised results more easily to be tabulated.

2. *The intolerance of the oriental churches.*—In the summer of 1838 Dwight, having visited Nicomedia in the preceding May, expressed it as his sincere wish that the "brethren" in that city might not secede but might continue in the national church.<sup>26</sup> In November, 1839, he spoke of individuals forsaking their church on account of a change in religious opinion, and of the consequent desirability of the recognition of an evangelical civil community in Turkey, and gave utterance to these significant words: "A separation ought not to be forced, although it will, without doubt, ultimately take place; for light and darkness cannot always exist together."<sup>27</sup> What caused this change of view in such a short space of time? The answer is easily discovered. Dwight had witnessed the persecution of 1839, and had become convinced that the church would not tolerate evangelicalism within her pale. And this being the case, schism was only a matter of time. That the excision of the evangelicals by the oriental churches, and the consequent necessity of organizing them into a separate church, were generally anticipated by the year 1842, is evident from the following extract of a committee report submitted to and adopted by the American Board at its thirty-third annual meeting at Norwich, Conn., in the September of that year:

Whenever those oriental churches, having had the gospel fairly proposed to them, shall reject it, excinding and casting out from

<sup>26</sup> *Missionary Herald*, December, 1838, p. 462.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, September, 1840, p. 355.



their communion those who receive it—as the Jewish church excinded and expelled the primitive believers, and as the Romish church excinded and expelled the Reformers—then it will be necessary for our missionary brethren to turn from them as apostate, to shake off the dust of their feet as a testimony against them, and to call on all God's children to come out from among them and not to be partakers of their plagues.<sup>28</sup>

3. Closely allied to the intolerance of the church, and underlying it, was *the essential antagonism between oriental orthodoxy and the missionaries' doctrines and methods*, which we may name as another cause of the abandonment of the original policy of non-proselytism.

To begin with, the Armenian church, as it came into contact with the evangelism of the American missionaries, more and more evinced a spirit which was far from the essentially evangelical character originally attributed to the oriental churches. Protestant evangelism was not so congenial to the Armenian church as had been supposed. The Armenian church, with the other oriental churches indeed, theoretically held to the supreme authority of the Scriptures. But, with the other churches also, it had given place to a great mass of patristic interpretations and ceremonial regulations prescribed by church councils, which had come to be regarded with a veneration next only to that accorded the sacred Scriptures, with the result that the Word of God had been all but lost in the traditions of men.

On the other hand, the missionaries' ideas and methods of evangelism were far too radical for the oriental churches, and certain on that account sooner or later to invite opposition. The missionaries' ideas were of the ultra-evangelical type. Rufus Anderson, the distinguished secretary of the American Board, was voicing the sentiments of the missionaries in the Levant when in 1842 he laid down the principle

<sup>28</sup> *Missionary Herald*, November, 1842, p. 432.

that the modern missionary should be more radical in his teaching than Luther; that he should insist on discarding all that was not expressly required by the Bible, instead of, like Luther, retaining all that was not expressly forbidden by the Bible. Perhaps it was teaching based on this principle that in the early years of the evangelical movement (1837) prompted an "enlightened" merchant, who went to the patriarchate to take out his marriage license, to refuse to pay the customary fees because their payment was not required in Scripture. As to the missionaries' methods of evangelism, these were radically "evangelistic." At a conference of the mission of the Levant, held at Smyrna, September 27, 1837, it was resolved:

That we regard the public and formal preaching of the gospel as an exceedingly important means for the conversion of men in these countries, as well as in our own, to be employed wherever and whenever Providence opens the way; and that we believe it to be practicable at most of our stations<sup>29</sup>—

an opinion which was readily adopted and urged upon the missionaries of the various stations of the mission by the Prudential Committee of the board. Now the native Christians regarded public preaching as the peculiar function of the church. When, therefore, they saw the missionaries resort to preaching, especially to preaching in order to conversion, they concluded that these men had come, not to spread education, but to establish some sect of their own, and proceeded to treat them like any other intruders. Dwight little understood at the time the "thoughtful and peculiar expression of countenance" with which in the course of an interview in 1835 the Armenian patriarch's vicar turned to him and said: "You will, by and by, become a preacher to the Armenians." In his account of the incident the mis-

<sup>29</sup> *Missionary Herald*, April, 1838, p. 116.

sionary adds naïvely, "I hope the prophecy will prove true." But we may venture to think that he did understand the vicar's "thoughtful and peculiar expression of countenance" at last when, the latter's prophecy proving true in the following year,<sup>30</sup> some of the warmest friends of the reform movement became disaffected, because they saw in the public services of the mission at Constantinople the nucleus of a new sect,<sup>31</sup> and the authorities of the church began to resist the missionaries' efforts at every turn.

By virtue of the mutual reaction of the prelatical traditionalism of the church on the one hand, and the puritanical evangelism of the missionaries on the other, the evangelical Armenians found themselves seceding long before they were excommunicated by patriarchal anathema. Attendance on the sacrifice of the mass early became the great question of conscience in the ecclesiastical life of the evangelicals. While it is clear that different missionaries differed in their counsels to them on this point, the common conscience of the great body of them condemned it as a species of idolatry, and many of them preferred to partake of the communion at the "mission church" with the missionaries and their families, rather than in the national churches. And so early as the beginning of 1835 some of them were urging the missionaries to secure the organization of an independent evangelical church, and soon after, the recognition of a Protestant civil community which should insure to them liberty of

<sup>30</sup> Dwight's first Armenian sermon was preached September 9, 1836.

<sup>31</sup> "October 7, 1842: Today I gave notice of the suspension of our Armenian service for the present. This step was taken to conciliate some of our former friends who have become disaffected, and are strongly opposed to this service, regarding it as the nucleus of a new and separate church organization. Only two individuals, formerly reckoned among the brethren, have as yet taken this stand; though several others feel very decidedly that the meetings ought for a time to be suspended. In deference to their judgment, and in consideration of their exposure, if a storm should arise, we have concluded to omit them for the present."—Dwight's Journal, *Missionary Herald*, July, 1843, p. 273.



conscience and make it possible for their numbers greatly to increase. The fact of the whole matter was that as soon as they had embraced the missionaries' views of religion, they found the old church uncongenial. Thus years before the excision of the evangelicals Dwight perceived that evangelical principles and practice, and orthodox principles and practice, were like light and darkness mutually exclusive.

4. *The official recognition of the treaty rights of American missionaries in Turkey by the United States government.*—In response to a memorial of the American missionaries in the Turkish empire submitted to the United States government through ex-Governor Armstrong of Massachusetts, Secretary of State Daniel Webster sent to the United States minister at Constantinople, David Porter, under date of February 2, 1842, a dispatch containing the following words:

It has been represented to this Department that the American missionaries, and other citizens of the United States not engaged in commercial pursuits, residing and travelling in the Ottoman dominions, do not receive from your legation that aid and protection to which, as citizens of the United States, they feel themselves entitled; and I have been directed by the President, who is profoundly interested in the matter, to call your immediate attention to the subject, and to instruct you to omit no occasion, where your interference in behalf of such persons may become necessary or useful, to extend to them all proper succor and attentions of which they may stand in need, in the same manner that you would to other citizens of the United States who, as merchants, visit or dwell in Turkey.

The strange position which Mr. Porter had assumed with reference to the American missionaries in Turkey—namely, that they were entitled by treaty to the protection of the government of the United States only so long as they refrained from proselyting—was virtually pronounced untenable by this dispatch. No such distinction could be drawn in practice as between proselyting missionaries and non-prose-

lyting missionaries, and it was now to be understood that, if a missionary had any right to reside in the Turkish dominions at all, he was as much entitled, as a citizen of the United States, to the protection of his government *in the pursuit of his calling* as an American merchant was in the pursuit of his. This dispatch from Washington had a very direct bearing on the missionary activities of the American missionaries in Turkey. From 1842 onward they were characterized by greater boldness and aggressiveness than ever before; and, so far as a policy of non-proselytism had been a matter of expediency, it was then flung to the winds.

By these various causes the American missionaries in the Turkish empire were led to relinquish their original policy of non-proselytism a number of years before the final disruption of 1846. Then in place of it was adopted the policy of only refraining from taking the initiative in any open rupture with the mother church. On this revised policy converts were to be made to Protestantism, but an independent Protestant church was not to be organized until the evangelical party was forced to it by hierarchical excision and anathema. That the missionaries for several years before the Protestant excision earnestly desired the hastening of the day when such a church should be established, is clear from the fact that they made it the subject of special prayer.

It should here be recorded that the original aim of enlightening and internally reforming the oriental churches never was, even since the Protestant excision, completely abandoned by the American Board, and that the policy of the board's Turkish missions in later years reverted especially to that original aim. The gaining of converts from those churches was not indeed deprecated, but it was not made the sole, or even chief, end of missionary activity among the

Christian races of the Turkish empire. And it may be affirmed that the promotion of the counter-reformation still in progress in the Armenian church was regarded as fully as important an end in itself as the maintenance of a large Protestant community.



## CHAPTER VI

### EARLY RESULTS

WHAT were the chief immediate results of the Protestant Reformation in the Armenian church?

First, *the introduction of Protestant teaching among the Armenians in the first half of the last century averted a serious crisis in religious thought.* The age of the Armenian newspaper was at this time beginning to dawn. In 1840—the year following the founding of *The Repository of Useful Knowledge*, published at Smyrna (1839-42, 1844-46) under the auspices of the American mission—appeared Baltasarian's *Daybreak on Ararat* (Smyrna, 1840-86), the precursor of a multitude of periodical publications<sup>32</sup>—the *Herald* (1840-41) and the *Advertiser* (1840-47?) of Constantinople, the *Polyhistor* of Venice (1843-), the *Patriot* of Calcutta (1845-52), the *Caucasus* of Tiflis (1846-48), the *Armenia* of Constantinople (1846-52), the *Europe* of Vienna (1847-63), the *Masis*<sup>33</sup> of Constantinople (1852-), the *Aurora* of Moscow (1858-64), the *Bee* of Tiflis (1858-86), and a number of other publications of more or less note—which, while some of them proved very short-lived, bore witness to the fact that Armenian journalism had come to stay. Now it was but natural that the new thought should bring in its train the questioning of the old creed. It was plain that the old faith which had greatly degenerated into superstition could not much longer be preserved in its old form. A more rational understanding

<sup>32</sup> The first Armenian periodical known to history is a monthly in the classical tongue, the *Herald*, published by the priest Harutun Schma vonian, at Madras, India, 1794-96. The next in order deserving the name is the *Byzantine Telescope*, a bi-weekly journal published at Venice, 1812-16.

<sup>33</sup> In 1879 *Masis* became a daily—the first published in the Armenian tongue, with the exception of the *Mschak* of Tiflis (founded in 1872) which began to appear daily in the preceding year—and continued as such until 1884.

of Christian truth must be inculcated. In the absence of this, French materialism and infidelity were sure to lay hold upon awakened minds. This one service, therefore, among others, Protestantism rendered the Armenian people: it placed an alternative before them for infidelity, so repugnant to the average Armenian mind, and made it possible for them to preserve the old faith, while discarding the old form.

In the next place should be mentioned *the benefit which the Armenian church derived from the evangelical movement in its emancipation from the influence of Rome*. Tschamurjian, the great champion of the church's orthodoxy, and the patriarch Matthew, the great persecutor of the Protestants, had a tinge of Romanism in their thought. Matthew's emphasis in his "New Creed" on the sacrament of extreme unction and the infallibility of the church was inspired more by Roman teaching than by Armenian. Now the reformers made it always a special object to point out to the orthodox Armenians that, in some things, at least, the Armenian church was as far removed from Romanism as the Protestants themselves were; and if Armenian writers of the latter half of the last century, and Matthew among others, are as pronounced in their denunciation of Romanism as they are in their condemnation of Protestantism, they received their first lessons from the Protestants. The debt of gratitude which the Armenian church owed the evangelical movement in this regard was so well recognized, that old-school Armenians repeatedly confessed, even in the earlier years of that movement, that Protestant thought had saved the Armenian church from the power of the papal propaganda.

As a third result of the evangelical movement we may mention *the establishment, for the first time, of a civil-ecclesiastical community in Turkey that maintained in practice*

*the strict separation of church and state, and thus insured freedom of conscience to all its membership.* In the old communities in Turkey there was no distinction made between church and state. Every member of a civil community was *de facto* also a member of the church which gave its name to the community. The patriarch was himself the personal embodiment of this union of church and state: he was both an ecclesiastical officer and a civil magistrate. Everyone under this system who renounced his church thereby also renounced the civil body of which he was a member, made himself an outlaw in the eyes of the Turkish government, and risked the persecuting wrath of his patriarch. The Protestant community was established on a different basis. There the line of demarcation between church and state was very strictly observed. The civil representative of the Protestant community was a layman possessed of no ecclesiastical authority; while by virtue of the Protestant system of church-membership which recognizes only those who have made a satisfactory profession of their faith before the local churches, a person who claimed membership in the Protestant civil community was not necessarily a member of the Protestant ecclesiastical organization. From this resulted a type of religious liberty unknown before in the Turkish empire. A man might belong to any one of a number of different Protestant sects, or might belong to none; yet as a member of the Protestant civil community he was entitled to the care of the Protestant Chancery and to the protection of the Ottoman government.

Above all and as inclusive of all the immediate results of the evangelical movement should be mentioned *the spiritual religion which was its peculiar boon to the Armenian people and to oriental Christendom.* It may be difficult to say whether emphasis should have been placed more on the



educational or on the evangelistic method of missionary work among the oriental churches in the early years of the American missions in the Levant. But this one thing is certain that the evangelistic method at this time enforced a lesson which no other method exclusively employed could have served to enforce, namely, that God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. The lack of spirituality in the Armenian church is nowhere more in evidence—outside of its public worship—than in its lifeless doctrine of faith. The first article of the “New Creed” of the patriarch Matthew betrays the misconception under which the Eastern churches have for so long labored. Faith to them has been synonymous, and only synonymous, with creed. And with that conception of Christian faith it is small wonder that Matthew finds no essential relation between faith and works, nor a sufficient ground in faith for human salvation. For the first time in many centuries Protestant preaching taught the churches of the East in general and the Armenian church in particular the all-important truth that faith is not a thing of the lips, but a principle of the life; and, removing the conception of faith from the sphere of the purely intellectual and human, declared faith to be of the essence of an inner relationship to God in Christ, a vital principle, and as such the all-sufficient ground of salvation before God.

## CHAPTER VII

### LATER HISTORY

CHURCHES were organized during the first ten years of the evangelical movement as follows: 1846—Constantinople First, Nicomedia, Adabazar, Trebizond; 1847—Erzurum; 1848—Aintab, Brusa; 1850—Constantinople Second; 1851—Diarbekir, Sivas; 1852—Constantinople Third, Aleppo, Killis Rodosto; 1853—Smyrna, Kessab, Marsovan; 1854—Cesarea, Arabgir, Akhissar, Tocat, Marash; 1855—Mashker (near Harput), Divrik, Adana.

The rate of planting churches in the ensuing twenty years was not so rapid: 1856—Harput, Khnus; 1861—Aidin; 1863—Diarbekir (re-organized); 1864—Bitlis, Malatia; 1870—Gurun; 1871—Zeitun; 1872—Hadjin; 1876—Van.

Territorial organizations were effected as follows: 1864—the Bithynia Union, and the Aintab Evangelical Union; 1865—the Harput Evangelical Union; 1868—the Central Evangelical Union; 1872—the Cilicia Union.

The government always regarded Protestant building enterprises with jealousy, and one of the greatest handicaps of the churches was in their lack of proper housing. In 1878 the church at Cesarea dedicated a house of worship erected by government firman with funds collected by the pastor in Scotland. It was said to be the first church building worthy the name erected by Protestants of Turkey. Almost the last church to own a fit place of worship was the mother church at the capital, where the government was from the beginning especially hostile to the erection of Protestant churches. The site had been purchased in the year of organization (1846). The firman for the building was issued in 1904, and the edifice dedicated in 1907. The American Bible Society

in 1873 dedicated in Constantinople a Bible House, which was used as headquarters for all Protestant missionary agencies at the capital and served to lend Protestantism a prestige it had not formerly enjoyed.

The success of the evangelical work in Turkey was in good part owing to that fine body of native preachers and pastors that the mission developed. We have space for but a few of the most representative men. John Concordance, a blind evangelist, was celebrated for his readiness in quoting scripture by chapter and verse. He died in 1869. He was a native of the Arabgir district, a graduate of the Harput Seminary, and labored at Havadorig, a mountain village near Mush. A tract from his pen on tithing was translated into English and several other languages, and read the world over, the American Board alone circulating 90,000 copies. Simon Davidian, who was born at Dalvorig, in the Armenian province of Sasun, labored at Khnus, Tchévirmé, Mush and Bitlis. "A man of originality of character, extraordinary learning and great practical ability." He died in 1894, aged 84 years, crushed by the news of the Sasun massacres, leaving a fragrant name for sanctity and service. Thomas Boyajian was ordained at Diarbekir in 1863. In 1867 he was in the United States soliciting funds for a church building. He served also as British consul and died in 1895. "Probably no Armenian in the interior of Turkey had a higher reputation than he. He was a man of noble character, a very eloquent preacher, and a successful diplomat withal." Harutun Jenanyan, an educator, founded academies at Tarsus and Iconium. Revivalist from 1889 onward, he labored at Aintab, Marash, Adana, Cesarea, Talas, Yozgat, Istanos and Sivas. He was said to show great skill in adapting modern revival methods to the conditions of the land.



Noteworthy revivals swept over the Armenian field from time to time. Under the labors of a grandmother of the writer and others there was a revival at Bardezag, in the Nicomedia district, in 1866, when that congregation quadrupled. In 1866-67 there were revivals at Marash and Harput. The latter congregation in twenty years gave to the church at large seven ministers of the gospel. There was an awakening at Bitlis in 1866, and again in 1870, and in 1876. In 1889 Aintab had a revival which spread to Marash, Hadjin, Adana and Cesarea. Another revival swept over the Central Turkey field in 1902-3, including Aintab, Marash, Hadjin, Adana, Tarsus, Killis, Aleppo and Urfa. Students and professors at Aintab College were active workers in this revival, "attended by such numbers of people that it attracted the attention of the government, and at the instigation of enemies an order was issued restricting the number of public meetings to three in each week." A considerable number of Jews are said to have asked for baptism during this revival.

The Protestant movement was not without its direct influence upon the old church and community. It could be said of Marash in 1863, "Drunkenness and superstition are diminishing; thousands have been led to see the emptiness of their dead forms of worship, who are not ready to espouse the cause of despised Protestantism." Another wrote in 1871, "There is a great work going on in Aintab among the Armenians, outside of the Protestant congregations. I was surprised to find so many Armenians who are evangelical in sentiment." In the latter year the bishop of Amasia swept two churches of their silver and gold plate, and appropriated the proceeds from their sale for the building of school houses and the support of teachers.

Reform societies were organized by old school Armenians in various places. In 1865 there was formed at Harput a

society having for its avowed object the reforming of the church and the maintenance of preaching. In 1868 there came into being at Cesarea a society whose members, though bitterly opposed to Protestantism, were themselves Protestants in all but name, seeking to enlighten the church from within. This society continued until 1885, when it was suppressed by the government. In 1883 there flourished at Marash a strong reform society demanding the discarding of church pictures and the liturgy in the ancient tongue, and advocating Bible preaching by the clergy.

Sporadic revivals even occurred. In 1884 there was an old church youths' revival at Sivas, with prayer meetings morning and night at which so many were anxious to pray that their leader, we are told, could hardly find time to speak. Most striking, if not most influential, was the movement of "Lovists" at Yarpuz and Zeitun, who held revival meetings marked by great fervor, proclaiming salvation by Christ alone. At the last-named place these Lovists had hundreds of enrolled members. Before long, however, they ran into erratic extremes, claiming the gift of prophecy and seeing visions. The movement was finally crushed out by the hierarchy in 1890 after running its course for about ten years.

It cannot be said, however, that the Armenian people as a whole took kindly to Protestantism. Why did not Protestantism make the same sort of headway among the Armenians of the nineteenth century that it made, for example, among the Germans of the sixteenth? The following circumstances will help to explain. In general, the Armenians of the nineteenth century were not so well educated as the German people in the sixteenth. Secondly, the Protestant reformation among the Armenians, in part owing to a desire of the mission to keep down the expenses, failed to develop that type of native leadership essential to the success of great

movements. Further, the Armenians, unlike the Germans, were a people scattered among alien races, living under hostile governments that watched every movement among them with an unfriendly eye. Finally, the grievances of the German people of the sixteenth century against a foreign pope were numerous and real, and their revolt political as well as religious, while the Protestant reformation among the Armenians was entirely spiritual in character, and the Armenian masses, far from having any grievance against their own church, viewed its disruption as the one thing at all costs to be avoided. Hence for the same reason that the Armenians had once refused to be absorbed by the Greek church, and later by the Latin, they now refused to turn Protestants.

The expansion of the work cannot be fully estimated without viewing the parallel growth of the American missionary enterprise in Turkey. In 1850 American missions in Turkey had seven stations (Constantinople, Bebek, Brusa, Smyrna, Trebizond, Erzurum and Aintab), with eighteen missionaries, six native pastors and preachers, and eight churches with a total communicant membership of about 240. By 1860, as we have seen, the field had been subdivided into three Missions, the Western, the Central and the Eastern. In the latter year there were 23 stations, over 100 missionaries, male and female, 40 pastors and preachers, and the same number of evangelical churches with a total communicant membership of approximately 1300 souls. By the year 1890 the Turkish Missions of the American Board were a one-third interest, having one-third of its converts throughout the world, employing one-third of its force and its funds, and contributing one-third of all native gifts. This position they maintained to the end.

During the period from 1819 to 1896, or from the beginning until the first great Armenian massacres, the Board



expended on its Turkish Missions approximately \$7,000,000, and employed 700 missionaries. In 1896 the valuation of the mission plant was \$1,500,000. At the outbreak of the World War it was stated that the American Board's investments in Turkey during the 96 years of operation aggregated \$20,000,000. Lands, buildings and equipment were valued at \$2,000,000, while the annual appropriations for operating expenses were \$360,000. The Turkish Missions Aid Society, organized in England in 1854, and renamed in 1893 The Bible Lands Missions Aid Society, an agency interdenominational in character, numbering among its patrons both churchmen and non-conformists, also rendered material aid, contributing in the 50 years preceding 1905, for *native work* in the Near East, over \$540,000, of which \$335,000 went for work in Asia Minor and European Turkey.

In 1914, on the eve of the First World War, the Board had 15 stations in Turkey, and 146 missionaries; there were 179 native ministers, 137 churches, 13,891 communicants, and 50,900 adherents. With the last figure closely tallies that of the Archbishop Ormanian in his diocesan statistics for 1910, namely, 49,050, which he gives as the number of Protestants throughout the territorial bounds of the Armenian church in Turkey.

The deepest and most enduring single evangelical influence upon the Armenians of Turkey at large came from the combined work of the American Board and the American Bible Society in disseminating the scriptures in the people's vernacular, notably Goodell's Bible for Turkish speaking Armenians published in 1842, and Elias Riggs' Modern Armenian Bible published in 1853. In the early 'seventies some 30,000 copies of the Bible were sold annually in the empire. It was estimated that not far from 300,000 Bibles were in daily use. Three Bible women of Cesarea visiting

860 families of that city reported finding Bibles in 763 of them. By the 'eighties relations between the old church and evangelical communions were cordial enough to admit of collaboration on a Modern Armenian New Testament published under the patriarch's *imprimatur* to secure its free circulation among his people (1882).

The missionaries were pioneers of female education. The first Armenian girls' boarding school was opened by a Miss Lovell at Pera in 1845. In 1868 the Ely sisters took charge of a girls' boarding school at Bitlis, founded two years previously. For many years, and well up to the eve of the First World War, they conducted the only boarding school for girls in that whole region. A similar school was opened in 1868 at Marsovan, followed in 1871 by a Home School at Scutari (Constantinople), whose first building was erected in 1875-76. This school in 1890 became the American College for Girls at Constantinople, removed in 1914 to the opposite shore of the Bosphorus and renamed Constantinople College. In 1874 a girls' school was opened in Nicomedia which later was removed to Bardezag, across the Bay, and in 1886 to Adabazar. In 1880 the people of Marash gave \$2,250 for a girls' seminary, which in 1886 was opened under the name of the Central Turkey College for Girls. In 1881 the Collegiate Institute for Girls was founded at Smyrna. The first kindergarten in the country was opened in 1884 as a department of this institution by a Miss Bartlett, daughter of a missionary.

The educational work of the Board proved of greater importance than the Board itself had fairly anticipated. The example set by Robert College, named for Christopher R. Robert, a New York merchant and original donor, founded by Cyrus Hamlin (1871) at Rumeli Hissar, on the Bosphorus, was followed by the Board at other points. Colleges were

opened as follows: Central Turkey College at Aintab, 1874; Euphrates College at Harput, 1876; Anatolia College at Marsovan, 1886; International College at Smyrna, 1902, and St. Paul's Institute at Tarsus, 1904. Four of these Colleges, Euphrates, Central Turkey, Anatolia and St. Paul's, had endowments on the eve of the First World War aggregating over \$300,000. Funds were being raised for a college at Van when the War broke out.

Each Mission of the three had its own theological school, the Western at Bebek (Constantinople), and later (1865) at Marsovan; the Central at Aintab, later (1865) at Marash, and the Eastern at Tocat, later (1859) at Harput. In the 'nineties, an appreciable number of candidates for the priesthood of the old church were attending the Mission Seminary at Marash, some of them paying their own way.

As between the American Mission and the native Protestant church, it was not to be expected that they would always see eye to eye. "Growing pains," such as have been reported in late years in other parts of the world field, early seized upon the Armenian evangelical churches. Where points of view were different, controversy was bound to arise. The missionary was an agent of a Board some 7,000 miles away, and viewed the interests of his Board, and his own responsibility to it, as paramount. The native pastor, on the other hand, first and last thought of his own people, and regarded the Board and its missionaries as but a means to an end. The viewpoints were each the exact reverse of the other, and only men of tact and discernment on both sides could sense the underlying unity of aim.

Some of the more radical missionaries seemed to believe that the best way to avoid trouble was to show the churches their place beforehand, that place being conceived as one of subserviency to the Mission. When in 1864 the Aintab



Evangelical Union was formed, an article was inserted into the constitution fixing the position of the native church as one of subordination. Whenever in the judgment of the missionaries it became necessary for them to act in matters relating to the formation of churches, and the licensure, ordination and installation of ministers, without calling a regular meeting of the native ecclesiastical body, they were to be regarded as having the right to do so. It was also provided that the Union was to have no control over the funds in the hands of the missionaries.

In a field like the Aintab district, this attitude of the Mission perhaps was feasible. The people there were simple folk, Turkish-speaking, devoid of that national pride characteristic of the Armenian-speaking majority of the north, looking up to the missionary and trusting him implicitly. In the north, on the other hand, while finances played their part in the controversy, the real root of bitterness lay in a highly developed national consciousness, and a commendable desire to assert the rights and assume the responsibilities of a native church, which, it was conceived, the missionaries inclined to hold too long under tutelage.

It was but a symptom of this insubordination of the native church to the Mission that certain young men of ability, finding that they would not be permitted to work with the missionaries on equal terms, sought an education abroad, to return to the homeland as representatives of such groups as would send them back to their own country with the status of missionaries. Thus Shishmanian, for example, returned (1879) representing the Disciples of Christ, and Hayguni representing the Baptists, of the United States (1881); Dobrashian was sent out as a medical missionary by the English Quakers (1882); Gabrielian labored for a time under the auspices of the American Baptists (1883);

and Jenanyan worked independently (1888). Defections of congregations had the same motive. The first Church of Constantinople would have gone over in 1864 to the English Episcopal church had it met with encouragement from the Church Missionary Society; a faction of the Diarbekir church for a time (1873-75) actually turned Episcopalian.

In 1882 the American Board finally took notice of the controversy and appointed a deputation to study the problem on the ground. This deputation was at Constantinople in the spring of the following year; it was composed of two committees working independently of each other, one representing the Board's temporary committee, the other the Prudential Committee, or permanent executive committee. At a conference of this deputation with the missionaries the following resolutions were adopted:

That we continue to recognize the Evangelical churches of Turkey as the chief agency for its evangelization, and ourselves as their helpers and co-workers in the Gospel, and especially that we accord to the preachers and the pastors of these churches all fraternal honor and affection.

That in all our work, evangelistic, educational, or literary, the same weight is to be given to native opinion as to missionary opinion, and that the work be prosecuted so as to secure, as far as possible, the concurrence of churches or brethren directly concerned and competent to judge in the premises; and we recommend that, as soon as possible, the stations give to brethren whose relations to the work render it suitable an equal responsibility and voice with themselves, as is now done in some cases in school boards, in literary works, etc.

It was also resolved that in places where native contributions approximated one-half the expense of the work, the entire care of evangelism should be left to the churches.

Pursuant to these principles, there were formed in 1884 "conferences" composed of missionaries and representatives of the native churches, one in each mission station. The

results obtained were pronounced of "the happiest." Chambers, the missionary at Erzurum, two years afterward declared, "Every year I am more and more convinced of the wisdom of this cooperative move and astonished that there should have been fears entertained of its success." The Board itself was highly gratified with the new move. "The conferences of the missionaries with representatives of the native churches," it was said, "have been most helpful to both parties, and have inspired a mutual respect and regard of greatest moment to the welfare of the common cause."

Now when a son becomes conscious of his own equality with his father, it is about time for him to think seriously of self-support. And indeed the native churches were not unmindful of their duty and privilege in this matter. In 1860 the First and Second churches of Constantinople consolidated and assumed self-support. Adabazar followed suit in 1862, Harput in 1865, the churches of Marash in 1874, Marsovan in 1879, Tarsus in 1893. Many smaller churches did the same thing from time to time. In 1870, in the destitute Chunkush region northwest of Diarbekir, there were not less than eight churches entirely self-supporting, and eight others were nearly so. With ever increasing emphasis the goal of complete independence of mission aid was held steadily in the view of the native churches. In the Central Turkey field the home missionary society planned to assume a growing measure of the burden of self-support until by 1920 the churches should be entirely independent of foreign aid.

Out of their poverty, the evangelical churches contributed to the work of sending the gospel to less favored communities. The region about Farkin, beyond Diarbekir, was inhabited by a population of Kurdish-speaking Armenians. The district, comprising a hundred small towns, was in utter spiritual destitution. There was no resident priest there, but



once a year one visited the region to baptize the children and to bless the graves of the dead. A "Mission to Kurdistan" was organized at Harput, and adopted afterward by the entire church. In 1868 seven young men educated at Marash at the church's expense were sent out to bring the gospel to this community. Kavmé Ablahatian, of Syrian extraction, the best known missionary to this field, toiled at Redvan 1876-88. By the year 1904 this work was entirely independent of the Board. In this year also the whole of the New Testament translated into Kurdish was ready for the press.

In the face of adverse conditions the liberality of the churches was constant. The missionary Greene, on furlough in the United States in 1869, published a comparative table of gifts of the Armenian churches, and the churches equal in number of a single denomination in a Western state, which was not flattering to the American churches. In 1902-3 the native gifts for all purposes within the bounds of the Western Turkey Mission were \$66,652, \$48,806 being for education. In Central Turkey native contributions in the same year totaled \$17,657, "more than half of it for education." At Aintab there were four old-school Armenians to one Protestant; as to property per man, the two communions averaged about the same. Yet the Protestants during 1880 gave for preaching, education, poor-relief and other purely benevolent objects more than twice as much as the old-school Armenians, or eight times as much *per capita*. "Never before," writes a missionary, "have I seen a more utterly disheartening state of things, physical, political, economic, yet have I never seen among the different communities such earnestness, such painful self-denial, which in many cases amounts to pure heroism, as during the past year. These people amaze me!" Harput in 1893 contributed for congregational and missionary purposes the sum of \$7,709. An

additional \$4,523 for education brought up the total to \$12,232, contributed "in a famine year, 'in His name'." Tithing was not uncommon among the churches, notably Harput, Marash, and Marsovan.

Several adverse circumstances, however, interfered with the plans for "a self-supporting church." *Pestilence* decimated the churches. In the summer of 1865 the cholera raged in Constantinople, carrying off with its 50,000 victims the civil head of the Protestant community. In the summer of 1875 there was a plague of cholera at Antioch, Damascus, and Aintab, in which last place alone 2,000 perished. *Famines* were not infrequent in the land. During a famine in Asia Minor in 1874, 150,000 are estimated to have died. In the year following, the missionaries at Cesarea were feeding 100,000 persons, their home churches contributing heavily toward the \$125,000 expended for relief, which means that considerable money that might have been spent for evangelism went to feeding the hungry, of whom ninety-five per cent were impermeable Moslems. There was another famine in 1880 in the regions of Diarbekir, Harput, Erzurum, and Van. In the Erzurum district in this year forty Kurds died to one Christian, and probably an equal proportion received relief. A third famine visited Asia Minor and Armenia in 1887. Government *oppression* also crippled the churches. For example, at Marash it took two months' labor each year to pay the government taxes, while the Protestant community of the city was levied upon for \$800 annually when their church property was only valued at \$2,500, and one wonders how the poor congregation was able to raise \$500 additional each year for the gospel. At Harput the government exacted from ten to fifteen per cent on land alone. In 1877 the missionary at Talas wrote, "The collectors take the last cow, sheep or goat, and even cooking utensils, and the last bed

from the poor peasants, and there is no appeal." In 1880, when the revenue of Turkey was one-fifth that of the United States, the allowance of the sultan and his entourage was \$5,720,000, or one hundred and fourteen times the salary of the president of the United States. In war and peace *massacres* of the Christian population took their toll. The massacres of 1877, of 1895-96, and of 1908, drained the congregations of some of their best blood, until finally the butcheries and deportations of 1915 swept the Armenian race, and with it the evangelical churches, out of Asia Minor. Last of all, *emigration*. So early as the year 1867 the tide of emigration from the Bitlis region of Armenia to the United States was on the move. By 1880 the emigrant flow out of the country, mostly to the United States, was at the flood stage. Large numbers of young men five years later were leaving the Harput region in search of work in America. And so late as the year 1907, on a single day some forty, many of them Protestants, left that city for the New World. "Much of the vigor and resources of our communities," wrote a missionary, "have been transferred to America by the constant stream of emigration; some of our churches have lost fully half their strength; some count their losses by scores, others by hundreds."

The antagonism of the Turkish government to the American Mission never was from the beginning in doubt. The missionaries' avowed purpose to use work among the native Christians of Turkey as but a stepping stone to Moslem work doubtless exasperated the Porte, and contributed to the latter's resolve to eliminate both missionaries and native Christians when the time should be opportune.

Following the Treaty of Paris concluding the Crimean War, and encouraged by what seemed to be the dawn of a new era of religious toleration, a number of Turks em-



braced Christianity. About 1857 a Turk by the name of Ahmed, with his wife and three little daughters, was converted at Cesarea. In 1860 six Moslem converts were baptized at the capital, one of them being an aged *imam*, and by the end of the following year the whole number of Turks baptized at Constantinople reached twenty-three. Somewhat less than half a hundred Turks altogether were converted; the Jesuits baptized approximately the same number throughout the country. But in 1864 the Turkish government was already employing restraining measures, and that, too, with the sanction and support of the British ambassador, Sir Henry Bulwer. Ten years later the Grand Vizier definitively declared that the *Hatti Humayun* provision for religious toleration did not contemplate Moslems.

Thereafter Moslem work was confined to the publication of the scriptures in Turkish. In the five years preceding 1878, when a complete Turkish Bible was published, some 17,000 copies and parts of the New Testament in Turkish were sold from the Bible House at Constantinople, "mainly to Moslems." For his share in this work, the missionary Parsons, of Bardezag, paid with his life in 1880. He was murdered with his Armenian servant in the open field in his sleep by agents of an *imam* to whom he had offered a Bible for sale. The assassins were arrested, identified, tried, convicted, imprisoned for a short time, and set free again by Hamid's government.

"The government," said a committee chairman who once had served as American consul in Turkey, at the annual meeting of the American Board in 1887, "feels its power gradually declining, and its empire crumbling away, and just in that proportion has it determined to resist more persistently every kind of interference from the civilized world." The suppression or suspension of newspapers, the closing

of schools, the refusal of permits to erect school houses or places of worship, and the preventing of land from passing into the hands of the missions were among the forms which this hostility assumed.

In 1893 the mission girls' school at Marsovan was burned down by incendiaries. Professors Thoumaian and Kayayan, of the American College there, were arrested, tried, and sentenced to death for alleged revolutionary activities, and afterward "pardoned" and expelled from the country. In 1895 mission property was burned at Harput, the loss being estimated at \$88,000. In the same year the mission Theological Seminary at Marash was burned by soldiers, the personnel of the mission being at the same time attacked. Meanwhile missionaries' touring rights were challenged. In 1894 Frederick Greene, missionary at Van, was expelled from the country. Two years later (1896) the younger Knapp, missionary at Bitlis, was arrested, taken to Alexandretta under guard, and shipped to Constantinople with a passport stamped "Expelled." It was affirmed that the missionary had "indulged in all sorts of subversive intrigues." His real misdemeanor consisted in having aided in relief distribution among the doomed Armenians of Sasun, and in having been a foreign witness of Turkish barbarities whose testimony in future to investigating commissions might prove embarrassing to the government.

The American Congress in the face of these hostile acts early in 1895 made an appropriation of funds for consuls to be stationed at Erzurum and Harput. In 1901 the Turks were forced to pay indemnities at Washington for past losses sustained by the missions. In the same year the French seized the port of Mitylene to enforce demands of their own, and in 1904 President Roosevelt dispatched a fleet to Turkish waters to reinforce demands under the "most favored nations

clause," based upon concessions to the French government. Matters were finally settled in 1907 by the sultan issuing an *iradé* recognizing all American institutions and residences in Turkey as lawfully established, and permitting the corporate ownership of mission property.

The *rapprochement* between England and Russia in this year seemed to bode no good for Turkey. The Young Turks took the alarm and by a *coup d'état* of July 24, 1908, Abdul Hamid was forced to restore the old Constitution, an event which raised extravagant expectations among both natives and foreigners. A sanguine missionary at Cesarea exclaimed, "This is nothing other than the birth of a genuine Ottoman nation. The Turks may surpass the Armenians in their appreciation of and devotion to the principles of real liberty and genuine civilization." More discerning minds abroad, however, had perceived that the Young Turks were rabid chauvinists in whose vocabulary "union" and "progress" meant but the casting of all Turkish nationalities into the Moslem mould. Following a parlor lecture delivered in London, in 1904, by Ahmed Riza Bey, afterward President of the Turkish Chamber, one of those present said, "I am not sorry that the gentleman has spoken, because it shows us how impossible it is to expect any reforms in Turkey from the Young Turkish party. They are only thinking of themselves. The liberties of the Christians would be just as unsafe under a Sultan with the sentiments of the gentleman who has just sat down, as under the present Sultan."

How genuine was the conversion of Turkey at the "revolution" became shortly apparent when in the province of Adana (Cilicia), in April, 1909, 30,000 Armenians were done to death. Twenty-six leaders of thirty-three different Protestant congregations, including six lay delegates, were caught on their way to an annual meeting of the Evangelical Union



at Adana City, and slain. "The large, prosperous church of Adana was reduced to dependence, losing 120 of its congregation, its church, school and parsonage, and sustaining private losses to the amount of nearly \$400,000." The losses of the national churches were proportionately greater, though no figures are here available. The Young Turks laid the blame for the Adana horrors on the sultan, whom they deposed; but a second massacre in the same month perpetrated by troops from Macedonia officered by Young Turks brought over "to restore order," pointed clearly in the other direction. The province of Adana had enjoyed immunity during the massacres of 1895-96, and the Young Turks saw to it now that it was given a taste of blood.

The massacres and deportations of Armenians at the beginning of the First World War (1915) are too familiar through British Blue Books, other war-time publications, and novels, to need recital here. The atrocities accompanying the great conflict reduced the number of Armenians in Asia Minor by one-half, and drove the survivors out of Turkey to lands adjoining and beyond the seas. The belligerent powers on both sides directly contributed to the elimination of approximately three millions of Christians, Armenian and Greek, from Asia Minor. The American Board liquidated its hundred years' interests in the country, and withdrew from the field.

How much is left of Armenian Protestantism from the great cataclysm may be conveyed by a few figures. At the beginning of the War, in 1914, there were in the three Missions of the American Board in Turkey some 150 missionaries, 1,200 native workers, and 137 organized churches with annual contributions for religious and educational purposes reaching a total of \$200,000. In 1918, or immediately after the War in Europe, there were but 36 missionaries in the

field, while in the whole extent of Asia Minor not more than 200 out of the original total of 1,200 native workers were found alive. Churches, schools and hospitals, with the exception of those at Constantinople and Smyrna, were closed or wiped out of existence.

A later investigation, in 1925, revealed not more than 15 organized Armenian Protestant churches throughout Turkey and Greece, and fewer than two dozen in Syria. In the two countries first named there were 1,498 communicants, with a total constituency of 12,101, these figures, however, embracing Greek evangelical churches as well as the Armenian. In Syria there were 1,502 communicants, and a constituency of 11,980. This makes a grand total of 3,000 communicants as against 13,000, and 24,081 adherents as against an approximate 50,000, before the War. The native contributions in Turkey and Greece in 1925 totaled \$103,208, of which \$95,668 was for education, while in Syria the refugee churches contributed a total of \$14,776, \$8,126 of it being for education. In this same year there were four or five evangelical churches in the Caucasus, growing by constant accessions of straggling refugees.

The geographical distribution of the refugee churches throughout the world has been as follows. Three unorganized congregations of not more than thirty members each were all that by 1935 remained in Asia Minor, one at Adana, another at Cesarea, and a third at Marsovan. There were also three churches at Constantinople, with three preaching stations in the suburbs. Evangelicals have been active in Soviet Armenia, where two former Harput ministers among others have labored. There have been four organized churches in Athens and Piraeus, in Greece, and one at Salonika, this last with a building of its own; three or four churches also in Bulgaria, notably at Sofia and at Varna. There have

been Armenian Protestant groups in France, at Paris, Lyons and Marseilles, in which last named city a religious paper also was published up to the time of the Second World War. There have been strong churches in Egypt, at Cairo and Alexandria, and churches also in Palestine, at Jaffa and at Jerusalem. Most of the Cilician Armenians having fled in 1921-23 to adjoining territory in Syria, the old Cilicia Union was there reorganized as the Armenian Evangelical Union of Syria and the Lebanon. The Union now has 23 member churches, with a communicant membership of about 1,500. The American Board and the Presbyterian Board together conduct a School of Theology for the training of ministers, at Beirut. In the New World refugee churches have existed at Mexico City, and at Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo and Montevideo. Some of the congregations named, mostly those in Syria, have been helped by the Council of Armenian Missions representing jointly the American Board and the Armenian Missionary Association of America.



## CHAPTER VIII

### OUR NATIONAL DEBT

WHAT has Protestantism done for the Armenian people?

In answering that question, one can not do better than follow the "Creed" of the Blind Man telling what Jesus had done for him. "He opened my eyes." Or, as we may put it in this permissible form of the Armenian, "He opened these eyes of mine."

"He" is always first. Protestantism ever has stressed the importance and primacy of Christ. It may be retorted, Did not the Mother Church? Yes; but who will deny that before the Protestant Reformation Christian people the world over were much in danger of losing their Christ? In going after saints and the Virgin they gravely risked losing the Lord. Every reformer, of whatever age, therefore, sought to bring the people back, not so much to the Church, as to Christ Himself, the Lord of the Church. Gregory of Nareg, Nerses Schnorhali, Gregory of Datev, and the Catholicos Moses III, previously named, were just such reformers among us.

The Blind Man said "He" opened my eyes. What in the meantime had the Jewish hierarchy been doing? They had only been content to let the man remain blind. No body of men is so bent on maintaining a status quo as is a hierarchy, the Junkers of the Church. If those Jewish authorities had only known, they would not have antagonized Jesus, but sought to get at His secret.

This they did in a way, but in the wrong way. In authority, and pomp and ceremony, they sought compensation for the loss of Him. John of Otzun himself cannot be said to have given the Caliph the proper evaluation of Christ when

he answered a question put to him by saying, "Yes, sir, our Christ does teach simplicity in dress and in everything else; but, you see, having lost the oldtime gift of miracles, we now are constrained to resort to these artifices of prelatical pomp." He very well knew that if the gift of miracles was withdrawn, the higher gift of Christian prophecy was still here if the Church's Timothies would only stir it up! In the measure that Protestantism has brought back the effective preaching of the Gospel of the Living Christ, it has restored to the Church a gift that is more than all the "silver and gold."

Protestantism, in the second place, has served to re-open our eyes, and that in several directions. It opened the eyes of the Armenian people to seek an asylum in this land of the free. Protestant missionary influences brought that largely about, though some missionaries were distressed in seeing their constituency melt away through emigration.

Yes; Protestantism proved also among us a great incentive to learning. Not that it gave us Armenians all the knowledge or scholarship we ever had. I wish it had given us more. But American missions dotted Asia Minor with colleges, which we were glad to help finance, and if some of the higher clergy of the National Church are today university bred men, it is in good measure a reflex from that influence. The American schools for a while longer made educational institutions in the country generally more secure. For so long as the American Government protected American missions, the Turks had to pay for every American college they burned.

But most of all Protestantism opened the eyes of our people to divine truth, and made of us a Bible reading race. Perhaps a better average of Armenians than of any other one nationality read the Bible today. It was not always so. It is well known that before the rise of Protestantism among

us, a choir boy was not allowed to touch the Bible on the lectern. That was for the clergy alone! And for a woman to be reading the Bible was simply scandalous! A priest who blessed a grave with readings out of the Classical Bible, when taken to task by a grandmother of the writer for not having explained that which had been read to the women present replied, "Had I read to them what I did in the vernacular, as you have done, I should not have received this coin!" It was a far cry from that to the *Imprimatur* of the Patriarch of Constantinople affixed to an edition of the Armenian New Testament in the vernacular published by the American Bible Society in 1882.

Yes, finally, we Armenians can truthfully say, Protestantism, through Christ, has opened these eyes of *mine*. I like that last because I think it is important. The older national Churches have always fully emphasized the collective side of religion with its racial implications. And is there not something fascinating to the ancient Armenian Ritual for all Armenians, as much indeed as there is to the English Prayer-Book for all Englishmen? But why go so far as to maintain that if an Armenian turns Protestant he ceases to be an Armenian? Turkish law and Romanist precedent did lend color to that sort of opinion once. But I noticed that the Turk himself knew better when he massacred or deported alike Protestant, Romanist and National Armenians.

The misconception is an old one. Even the Virgin Mother once thought she would find her Christ among her own kinsfolk in the caravan. She did not find Him there, but in His Father's House, engaged about His Father's business. Our fathers and mothers of a hundred years ago knew better than those who say today that Church and Nation are one.

Protestantism is rightly known as an individualistic religion. It is proud to be that. For we Protestants do empha-



size individual responsibility. I mean lay responsibility. Khrimian Hairik, as clean and sincere a saint as the Armenian Church has ever produced, sought once as Catholicos the advice of two or three high ecclesiastics on the question of the remarriage of widowed parish clergy, and when they said, "No," the matter was dropped there. But why was it dropped? Had the laity no voice in such a matter? Had they surrendered their time-honored rights in the government of the Church? That thing could not have happened in the Protestant communion.

But let it be remembered that lay responsibility lies not in matters of administration alone. It means that if the clergy are incompetent or worse, it is the laity's fault. It means that if spiritual reform is in question, it is for the laity to put it through. In matters of faith and doctrine, it means that the laity are not to be fed by the clergy as are the young birds by their mother, but must seek an intelligent understanding that they can call their own. Is it a question of private interpretation all over again? Yes; you either have that, or you have nothing. We each must understand God and the things of God in his own way, or we do not understand them at all. By all means ask help from those who should know better than you, but, for God's sake, don't be a parrot!

Protestantism resolves itself to the supreme issue of the inviolability of private conscience. The question uppermost in the world just now is whether any state or ruler has any right whatever to assume authority over the individual conscience. That question sometimes becomes a burning one even in these United States. To that question long ago Protestantism answered, "No." And "No" also to the question whether the Church has any such right. Away back in

the sixteenth century Protestantism put up a sign on the door of every man's conscience for a warning to both Church and State, *Private: Stay Out!* And the fresh awakening of that conviction among the Armenian people was one of the most valuable contributions of Protestantism to their life.

## CHAPTER IX

### WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

ARMENIAN Christianity generally, and Armenian Protestantism in particular, sustained in the massacres and deportations in Turkey accompanying the First World War a most terrible blow. But they are not destroyed, and Armenian Protestantism, not less than the mother church, both in this country and in other lands, must still continue to look ahead. In viewing the future of Armenian Christianity throughout the world we have nothing to go by but History, which is said to repeat itself. Will it, in the light of History, survive in the lands of its dispersion, in this land, and in others, including the homeland of the race itself, and under what conditions?

History shows that Armenians of a Dispersion, wherever permanently settled, provided the country was Christian, sooner or later were absorbed into the native population. When they did not move away, the Armenian colonies of Poland, Hungary and Italy, in time were lost to their own race. To mention but a few representative groups, here in America, English churches, Welsh, Dutch and German, have found it difficult to maintain their old national and ecclesiastical characteristics and ties. And we Armenians will hardly be expected to do so indefinitely in this country.

For one thing, our congregations become increasingly English-speaking. The American public-school system will see to that. Besides, we are now living under a different régime from that prevailing among us from time immemorial. From pre-Christian times church and state have represented to us Armenians two sides of one shield. But as Americans, we now believe in the separation of church and



state. Protestant Armenians emphatically believe that they can belong to another Church besides the "national," so-called, and still be Armenians.

But in this country we shall scarcely be even that for long, except in reminiscence of a proud past. Not necessarily shall we lose our racial identity by amalgamation, though the melting pot knows no discriminations. For while Armenians, like other racial units, may long continue to marry among themselves, they still will be more and more Americans. Where, then, will our future lie? Not, I fancy, in race, or language, or ecclesiastical ties or loyalties, least of all in any sort of Americanism, which itself is a developing and fluid thing, but in somewhat other. And that somewhat we shall find in none but Christ alone, in a supreme and unyielding loyalty to Him, in the faithful preaching of His Gospel, and in the sacrificial living of His sort of life, by which alone shall we render any enduring service to our adopted land, and leave behind us a worthy inheritance of character and tradition to our posterity about which we are sometimes so anxious.

But Protestant Armenians in this country need not wait to be just amalgamated. They have a better future even than that. If nearby there be communities of races to be Christianized and Americanized usually inclined to be friendly to Armenians, such as Jews and South Europeans, a Protestant Armenian Church will know best how to serve as an intermediary for Americanization, usually being as we are a little further advanced in that line than other racial groups. One American woman, who herself had married a fine specimen of an Armenian, once said to me, "Americans don't like Armenians because they are too much like themselves!" That but points to some possibilities for Protestant Armenian churches as neighborhood churches.



As to Soviet Armenia, how will matters stand there? Things have developed fast there since the Communists persecuted and even killed Protestants along with other Church people. One after another the old handicaps placed on religion in the Soviet Union have been removed. It is said that with the passing of the old generation of rabid Communists the old hatred for the Churches also has died down. The Churches, in fact, by their splendid loyalty to the state throughout the late War, and not least in Soviet Armenia, have endeared themselves to the nation. Religious toleration becomes in Armenia in principle an accepted tenet. And the national Church, in the recent past herself a persecuted Church, hardly will act the part of persecutor hereafter of dissenters. Rather we have every reason to expect that the relations between the Churches will continue most cordial, and the national Church will regard the Protestant churches in every way not as rivals but as friends and helpers.

So long as modern world conditions of intercourse and commerce prevail, we may expect that there will be Armenian colonies large or small in scattered areas. They will be taken care of by their respective ecclesiastical organizations. Here the national Church must study not alone how to keep her scattered flocks "national," but how to assist them to adjust themselves to their environments and tasks. The national churches are capable of doing a missionary work in heathen lands, provided their constituency are not regarded as but sacks of wheat to be consumed, but as seed to be planted and to multiply. The Protestant churches doubtless will find it desirable to continue and improve upon their own present world-wide organization. As subsidiary to this end they will need information about each other, co-operation in active work, and also ample funds to use where they will do the most good. The idea of the Armenian Missionary

Association of America doubtless will grow into a world fact. Here and abroad the American churches will be of help to us. In our parish work in America American churches and ministers should be sought as denominational and local advisers and helpers. Abroad the American churches will help us financially, but for the most part, not as they do mission fields, but the needier churches throughout Protestant Europe.

As I write these lines, I find myself within a few days of the Centennial date, July 1, 1946, closing the Missionary Association's "campaign" for its \$100,000 Centennial Fund. I cannot therefore more appropriately conclude the chapter than by appending the following item furnished to me by the Executive Secretary which readers will find both timely and informing.

*THE ARMENIAN  
MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION  
OF AMERICA, INC.*

Out of a vision of the spiritual reconstruction of a nation that suffered indescribable horrors during the years of the First World War, was born, in 1918, the Armenian Missionary Association of America, Inc. The Association's objects are defined in its Constitution in the following terms:

"To promote the general interests and agencies of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the United States and abroad, and to carry on religious, educational, literary, philanthropic and other work, including the establishment and aiding of Armenian evangelical churches."

Since 1927 the administration of the missionary enterprise overseas has been placed in the hands of the Executive Council of Armenian Missions, consisting of nine members, five representing the Missionary Association, and four the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Boston. The annual



budget for the work of the Council is provided on a definite ratio by the two constituting bodies.

During the past twenty-five years, or from the time of its inception, the Association has endeavored to achieve its objectives as conditions permitted. Its fields of operation have included simultaneously or severally during certain periods Armenia, Iran, Syria, Constantinople, Bulgaria, Greece, France, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. From time to time the Association has raised and appropriated sums small and large also for various objects over and above the Council's annual budget. Besides helping a number of churches and schools outside of fields occupied by the American Board, it has aided worthy special objects, such as the training of young ministers, the printing and distribution of religious literature, and poor relief.

The Association depends for its funds on membership fees, donations from individuals and organizations, and special bequests. Its constituency, composed of Protestant citizens of Armenian extraction and their families, in the United States, in the absence of available official census data, is roughly estimated at 10,000.

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